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ABSTRACT

This document presents the seven best 1991 portfolios, written by high school students entering Miami University (Ohio) seeking credit and advanced placement as part of the university's optional portfolio writing program. The program requires students to submit four pieces: (1) a reflective letter introducing the writer and the portfolio; (2) a story or description; (3) an explanatory essay; and (4) an analysis of a written text. Each portfolio is read independently by two faculty members of the Department of English specially trained in portfolio writing assessment. The readers follow a 3-point scoring guide developed specifically for the Miami University portfolio program. Appendices include a detailed description of each piece, together with submission guidelines; the 1991 Scoring Guide; and a list of the supervising faculty. (GLR)

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***The Best of
Miami's Portfolios
1991***

Selected and Edited by

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Collin Brooke
Kathy Murphy
Erica Scott**

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We are grateful to the colleagues and institutions who have made Miami's program in portfolio assessment possible, for the program has provided us with the writing that appears in this publication.

Oxford, Ohio

Laurel Black
Collin Brooke
Kathy Murphy
Erica Scott
Editors, *The Best of Miami's
Portfolios, 1991*

Introduction

1991 marks the second year that Miami University has awarded entering students credit and advanced placement in college composition on the basis of a collection of their best high school writing. Miami University's optional portfolio writing program has two major goals: 1) to provide a fair and accurate measure of a student's writing ability and 2) to support and encourage writing teachers and the teaching of writing at high schools in Ohio and across the country.

A Miami University writing portfolio consists of four pieces: 1) a reflective letter introducing the writer and the portfolio; 2) a story or description; 3) an explanatory essay; and 4) an analysis of a written text. For a detailed description of each piece, together with submission guidelines, please see Appendix B and C at the end of this volume. Each portfolio is read independently by two faculty members of the Department of English specially trained in portfolio writing assessment. The readers follow a 3-point scoring guide developed specifically for the Miami University portfolio program. The 1991 Scoring Guide is included as Appendix A.

Students whose portfolio is rated "very good" or "excellent" (a score of "6") earn six credits in college composition and completely fulfill their university writing requirement. Students whose portfolio is rated "good" (a score of "3") receive three credits in college composition, partially fulfill their writing requirement, and receive advanced placement (ENG 113). Students whose portfolio is rated "fair" or lower enroll in two semesters of College Composition (ENG 111 and 112). In 1991, approximately 45% of the students submitting a writing portfolio received either three or six credits in college composition.

The seven portfolios included in this volume* were not only rated "excellent" by both faculty raters but were judged to be truly outstanding, the very best of the 370 portfolios submitted. So it is important to realize that many, many portfolios that fell short of the writing quality represented here in fact earned college credit. We hope that students who write well will not be discouraged from submitting a portfolio by these exceptional collections of writing. Indeed, our hope is that they will inspire students and teachers alike to produce better work than ever before.

* Each portfolio was originally no more than 12 pages. But in the process of preparing them for publication, we standardized the type face and margins, and added the author's introductions and readers' comments. As a result of these changes, some of these portfolios now exceed the page limit.

Portfolio by Alison Scott

**Talawanda High School
Oxford, Ohio**

Supervising Teacher: Marilyn Elzey

Author's Introduction

Uniqueness is the cayenne pepper of life, I'm convinced. My parents must feel the same way, since they named me Alison Scott—the one “I” rendering me unique, though unable to buy any personalized mugs or key rings.

I savor my left-handedness and red-headedness, but not quite as much since I found out I'm more likely to get skin cancer or get killed using equipment designed for right-handed people. But still, I love finding little ways to be different. I've been on campus one week and am happily convinced that I am the only one who wears her backpack on both shoulders at once, instead of slinging a strap over one shoulder.

I've always loved writing, maybe because it is so unique to each person. And I've had plenty of encouragement from my family and my demented cat Julius, on whom I could always count to ask me to feed him.

I'm a microbiology major here at Miami. That may be peculiar, considering science has sometimes been more of a struggle for me than other subjects. But it keeps me constantly intrigued, and that's the way I want to approach learning and the world.

As an endnote, I'd like to address everyone in saying: “Enjoy your uniqueness.” But, to lefties, beware the killer right-handed punch ladles!!

REFLECTIVE LETTER

Dear Miami U. writing teachers,

It feels strange to sit here and consciously analyze the process I go through

when I write. It's not that I'm oblivious to this "method," but if I'm writing something I really like, typing becomes less a mechanical activity than a stenography of my thoughts and conclusions. "New York at Night" is a good example of that. The composing part was easy, because I'd already replayed the scene in my head a thousand times, each time making different connections.

This is where I rely on writing. That is, I can mull over a situation or dilemma and get some general ideas about it, but it's not until these ideas can arrange themselves coherently on paper that they become concrete. In that respect, I suppose writing gives some much-needed order to my cluttered mind and its ideas. The second piece, "The Two Faces of Christianity," definitely served this purpose. I have to confess—I'm not devoutly involved with religion, or at least its specific doctrines and rules. But writing this forced me to ask myself just what I believed and what kept me going to church every week. To make it harder, I delivered this piece as a sermon on a Youth Sunday. It was the day before the ground war in the Persian Gulf began. Many of the people in the congregation frowned upon my assertions. But in the end I was encouraged, because I saw that my written opinions stood on their own, even when stacked up against popular attitudes.

I was surprised and pleased that some of my convoluted thoughts had been able to organize themselves in the sermon. But if there's anything I distrust in analyzing the world, people, or even literature, it's simplicity. I've seen too many people use religion as a shield from the complexity of the world and the words "right" and "wrong" to quickly dispose of a conflict or unorthodox idea. I approach literary analysis trying to keep this in mind, and it creates unlimited possibilities.

I did notice that two of the pieces I'm submitting deal with dual images of things, from Christianity to the concept of reality. I like this sort of topic because

it does breed so many new ideas. More ideas to add to the melee in my brain. So I guess it's inevitable that I'll keep writing. Happily, but also to protect my sanity.

NEW YORK AT NIGHT

"Ooh, isn't it beautiful?" my friend said. She sat next to me, gaping at the brilliantly lit skyscrapers. If there's anything more incredible to a small town person than New York City in the day, it's New York City at night. We sat pressed close to the all-glass wall in front of us. "Look at all the lights," my friend continued. As usual, I had trouble seeing things in the manner that my friend did. Especially after the people we had met that week. I found myself contemplating the dark spaces among the lights, wondering what was hidden there. Where were Roy and Ines in that picture?

Roy had squirmed a little as he stared out at the twenty-five pairs of scrutinizing adolescent eyes. I'm sure he knew that some of them had already convicted him. Nonetheless, he began.

"It was two years ago that I found out I was HIV-positive." He went on to eloquently tell his story. He was homosexual, and he stated it in such a matter-of-fact way that I could see several pairs of eyes give a start, before slipping into camouflaged nonchalance again. Speaking on, he tried in any and every way to explain to us his experiences "living...not dying...with AIDS." I was touched, finding myself drawn into his courage and determination.

Ines sat slight and haggard in her chair, her brown hair in wisps about her face and circles under her eyes. She had gotten AIDS through IV-drug use, and she also had four children. She answered all questions in quiet simplicity, except

one. She was asked bluntly, "How do you deal with the fact that AIDS is terminal?"

She stared back with a withering look. "It's not going to kill me," she answered placidly. "I'm going to beat it."

Now there was pity in almost every pair of eyes as she continued. "But I can teach people about AIDS, talk to people. They have to learn about it and accept it."

They had both said they just wanted to educate and sensitize people. And they were willing to reveal every cranny of their personal lives to do so. All in all, they were full of hope. Was that hope justifiable? We were a bunch of teenagers, products of our society's and our parents' attitudes, mixed together with our own insecurities and fragmented ideas. For all they knew, everything they said would bounce right off of us.

I realized how cynical my thoughts were, as I sat looking out at the city. Everything we had discussed couldn't have been for nothing. Some people had to have had their ideas challenged. But I couldn't know that, and neither could Roy or Ines. How could they do what they did? How could I help, when it seemed so futile?

I had walked past thousands of people in the New York City streets and almost none of them had looked me in the eye. How do you sensitize people who don't even want to look at a problem? It's easier to ignore it, to concentrate on the lights, not the dark places.

Contemplating this, I moved from my seat and walked to the balcony that looked down on a stage and dance floor. A band had just begun to play, led by a pudgy bald man who played the keyboard. I was entranced as I watched his fingers zip over the keys, pounding out a fast, throbbing song. The dance floor

was empty. But he kept on playing, the beads of sweat collecting on his forehead. The floor was still bare. His face turned red with his effort, and he shrugged off his jacket. And, finally, a couple ambled out onto the dance floor and began moving at a slow trot. The keyboardist's face lit up, and he played with even more vigor.

Somehow the two things meshed in my mind. Ines and Roy didn't expect to change the attitudes of every one of their listeners. But if one or two people were affected, it would be worth the effort. To fight for something wasn't to get glory and quick results. It was a lot of playing your heart out to empty rooms, until someone got up to dance.

It has always been my nature to look into the dark places. I see now that there are almost always sparks in these places, even if they don't meet the eye at first. All it takes is hope, effort, and time to make the light catch and be sustained.

THE TWO FACES OF CHRISTIANITY

When I was little, I loved all fairy tales. But my favorite one was "Little Red Riding Hood," because in the version of the story I had, Little Red Riding Hood had red hair—like me. I also had a doll to go along with the book. But it wasn't a normal doll. If you held her one way, she was Little Red Riding Hood, but if you grabbed her feet and turned her upside down, she became the wolf. Needless to say, most of the time I played with her as Little Red Riding Hood, because I didn't like to look at the wolf. But it was a doll that always interested me, because it had two faces.

Lately, I've begun to realize that several important aspects of Christianity

are also two-faced, but not in the negative manner that such an expression usually implies. Rather, it seems to me that this duality enhances our faith and fuels the all too hard-to-grasp sensations of hope and peace.

One way of looking at Christianity is that it provides equilibrium in our lives. It acts as a constant in a world with a continuously changing sense of right. An example of this is the Persian Gulf. George Bush has described the conflict as one between "right" and "wrong," Saddam Hussein, of course, being in the "wrong." But it's hard to look at the situation and not remember that just a few years ago, Saddam was "right," and the Ayatollah was "wrong." It's easy to see how anyone trying to find a source of foundation or constancy in the politics of the world will find herself sorely disillusioned. Granted, the concept of "rightness" is something a little bit different for every person, but the basic principles that Christianity represents provide a foundation for each person's perception of rightness. And in so doing, Christianity provides equilibrium.

On the other hand, Christianity also allows us to broaden our view of the world's possibilities, and go beyond traditionally established "social stability." To many, idealism is synonymous with "wishful thinking," or hope that's not within the realm of possibility. However, we can't forget that Christ was the ultimate in idealists. He preached love to a world of hate and sought peace when others would have had violence. He did not create a perfect world, but he has inspired millions through the centuries to love instead of to hate.

Christ's idealism allows us the privilege of hope. Because in essence, idealism and hope are one and the same. We cannot have hope that a better, more ideal day will come if we don't even consider it a possibility. In these respects, then, Christian faith provides both stability and a needed measure of instability, or freedom to look beyond the status quo.

Duality of thinking is also required on our part for us to have a sense of peace. On the one hand, every Christian must view the world's complexities as an adult. Religion enables us to see the unity in all things, and, because of this, we cannot allow our vision to be fragmented, to look only at the surface of an issue. Like my Little Red Riding Hood doll, things are always more complex than they appear. For example, in the Persian Gulf, realities exist beyond the waving of a flag. To rationalize simplistically or deny the many layers of questions is to deny ourselves unity of sight. Granted, it is often easier to stay at the surface, but simple rhetoric is often dangerous, and simple answers sometimes prove to be the most destructive.

On the other hand, we must not only be able to view things as an adult, but also as a child. Christ called the children to come to him, and, similarly, we must cherish the child in ourselves. This child is repulsed at the idea of senseless slaughter and shocked by the evil that human beings can inflict on one another.

To lose touch with this child is to become numb, focused solely on the logistics and dogma of the world. On the same note, to never grasp the adult can result in emotion without direction, or an inability to act creatively on our feelings.

With the duality of these entities within ourselves, we find Christ's peace. Not a deluding peace, or a rationalizing peace, but one that gives us constancy and stability. We also find Christ's hope. Not a passive hope, but one that constantly struggles to see the possibility of love prevailing over hate, honesty over deception, and peace over war. By clinging to it, we can go beyond the world's traditional limits and show that there is a better world beyond.

TWO TYPES OF REALITY

The intriguing, mysterious side of the human heart depicted in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* sends chills up the spine. The idea of a hidden reality that is dark and primitive is almost appealing in the everyday monotony of things. However, there is another level of reality that is revealed in *Heart of Darkness*, one that exists in tandem with the first, more exciting one. Marlow refers to it as the "surface-truth"¹ of life. This reality is made up of the seemingly mundane activities of everyday life, or "the saving illusion of the work ethic."² It is far from the insidious force of reality present in the jungle, but it shows its face just as often in the book. The characters balance the two levels of reality in their lives to various degrees. Many of the minor characters tend to rely too heavily on the surface-truths, never looking to the deeper level, while Kurtz is immersed in this deeper reality of the jungle. Marlow, however, gains an ideal balance of the two, in his journey through Africa.

The men had come to Africa for different reasons. Kurtz had "idealistic social and humanitarian reforms"³ that he took with him, and he believed that the white man should act as a role model to the natives (even if this entailed their elevation to "supernatural" status). Marlow called Kurtz's beliefs "burning noble words,"⁴ but Kurtz's actions became far from noble. He became immersed in the jungle's deep darkness, working to integrate himself with the darkness by becoming the natives' object of worship. In such circumstances, Kurtz sank "deeper into delusion and depravity...cut off from any social salvation."⁵ There were no surface truths to Kurtz's existence. Within the closed, uncivilized environment, his lofty ideals turned sour, as the primitive evil and lust for power gained control of him. Marlow asserted that: "his soul is mad. Being alone in

the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and, by heavens! I tell you, it had gone mad."⁶ The darkness in the wilderness paralleled the darkness in his soul, and he became increasingly aware of that.

Kurtz saw only the odious forest around him, and he responded to the evil without restraint, thereby "licensing his appetite for domination."⁷ Restraint could have protected him to some degree, keeping him in touch with at least a surface truth of propriety. But by persuading himself that there was "an absolute, ontological difference" between Europeans and Africans, he indirectly eliminated the need "for the restraint that kinship traditionally entails."⁸ He lost touch with the outer level of reality, as is shown by the heads unnecessarily elevated on posts at the Inner Station. However, the ultimate symbol of his immersion in the dark level of reality was the postscript to his report, which exclaimed "Exterminate all the brutes!"⁹ His humanity, or at least his sense of restrained decorum, had vanished. Kurtz was existing on one plane of reality, isolated from the other.

The opposite extreme was seen in some of the other acquaintances of Marlow. These people relied heavily on surface truths, not allowing themselves to enter Kurtz's lower, darker region. The Intended, for instance, had constructed for herself a world composed solely of surface illusions, illuminating herself in "the inextinguishable light of belief and love"¹⁰ for Kurtz. She idealized him and their relationship. Marlow had the opportunity to shatter her dream world with Kurtz's real last words, but "her saving illusions could not have borne the demonic words."¹¹ She was weak and hollow. There was no inner reality for her, just as there was no outer reality for Kurtz.

The same inner reality can be said to be lacking in the accountant and the manager, though their surface truths were focused on their work. The accountant was well-dressed and polished in the midst of the African jungle.

Marlow observed a dying man who lay next to the accountant groaning, but the accountant was oblivious to his agony, engrossed in making "perfectly correct transactions."¹² Similarly, the manager concentrated on financial and business matters, having no more substance than to "inspire uneasiness."¹³ Concentrating on book entries and profit margins in the darkness of the African continent seemed rather absurd, since it denied the deeper realities of the situation. But there was security to be found in the "restraint of the clerk and those like him who defeat(ed) darkness by keeping their heads down to surface truths."¹⁴ They didn't have to face the horrific darkness that Kurtz had been engulfed by. They may have felt less despair, but they had a fragmented perception of reality.

Whether they were even strong enough to face the inner, evil reality is another question. Their lack of sight left them relatively hollow and deluded. In a certain sense, by accepting such a base view of reality they lied to themselves, making their existences fragile. On the other hand, there were stronger characters who dealt in surface truths and a certain degree of restraint, but not to delude themselves. Rather, they did so in the knowledge of the destruction that could come from ignoring one or the other reality. The cannibals were the less-mentioned of the characters that possessed this trait. They grew up in the darkness, participating in the savage rite of cannibalism. However, when thirty of them were on the boat with five white men, even though they were famished, they didn't attack any of the Europeans. Marlow was amazed, and he would've just as soon expected "restraint from a hyena prowling amongst the corpses of a battlefield."¹⁵ Living in Africa, it is not surprising that the cannibals were aware of the darkness. But they possessed an inner strength and sense of propriety that allowed them to practice restraint.¹⁶ This awareness and strength was given to one other character only, and that was Marlow.

Marlow did not come to Africa with this delicate balance of realities. He, like the other Europeans, knew "how to keep to his surface truths."¹⁷ He was a sailor, and he found satisfaction in the performance of his duties. He possessed an inner strength and awareness, which allowed him to sense that there was something he sought in Africa. As he traveled, he realized that he was seeking understanding of Kurtz and the dark reality that he represented. Still, there was no danger of his becoming immersed in that second reality. Even as he traveled down the river, he held to his surface truths. His delayed stay at the Outer Station (until the boat could be fixed) allowed him ample time for reflection. Still, he confessed that: "What I really wanted was rivets, by heaven! To get on with the work, to stop the hole."¹⁸ He wanted the mindless occupation of repairing the boat, to keep himself from becoming transfixed by the jungle's darker side of reality.

Unlike Kurtz, Marlow was committed to self-restraint. He wished neither to dominate nor to be dominated by the natives and their habitat.¹⁹ When the darkness came too close to him, he pulled away. For instance, when the helmsman was killed and bled on Marlow's shoes and socks, Marlow immediately threw them overboard, ridding himself of the taint of death and violence.²⁰ Marlow could witness the other side of reality from a distance by observing Kurtz, whose extreme behavior showed the infinite capacity for evil in man's heart. Marlow discovered the "potential hell in the heart of every man,"²¹ that existed along with the surface truths. But Kurtz's destruction (and the hollowness of the Intended and the Company employees) allowed him to also see the necessity of balancing the two realities.

Marlow was discovering Kurtz just as Kurtz was discovering himself; because of this, when Kurtz reached a final enlightenment at death, Marlow could partially share that understanding. Kurtz's last utterings were to moan

"The horror!"²³ With those words, he had realized the true horror of human existence and the darkness that had taken him in. In many ways, his experience showed that inner "truth is unendurable in the context of everyday life,"²³ thereby making surface realities necessities.

Marlow was left with a rather morbid wisdom concerning the depravity of man. However, two things let him live on without despair. First of all, his surface truths helped him maintain some sort of equilibrium. But also, Marlow didn't actually experience the horror and agony expressed by Kurtz. Marlow himself had said that it was "impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of our existence"²⁴ to anyone else, so it would've been impossible for Marlow to have truly experienced Kurtz's realization. Still, he possessed knowledge of the horror's existence, even though he didn't feel its full force. He was in possession of the second reality, or at least shadows of it.

Marlow had quite a burden to carry as he went back to civilization. He must stay strong by nourishing his surface truths (as he obviously did, since he was telling the story from the deck of a ship). He remained loyal to Kurtz's legacy, professing that: "The most you can hope from (life) is some knowledge of yourself— that comes too late."²⁵ Observing Kurtz, he had realized that in life some people needed delusion to survive (as the Intended needed it), and the best thing for most to desire was a brief, terrible enlightenment before death, so as not to die deluded. But in the process of living, to be truly happy, inner and outer realities must be balanced. To possess only the inner level, like Kurtz, is unendurable. But to possess only the outer shell results in soullessness and hollowness. Combined, as they were in Marlow, there is hope for happiness as well as understanding.

NOTES

1. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*. (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1910), 103.
2. R.A. Gekoski, "Heart of Darkness," *Conrad*. (London: Elek Books Limited, 1978), 77.
3. Robert F. Haugh, "Heart of Darkness," *Joseph Conrad*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), 42.
4. Conrad 123.
5. John A. McClure, "The Rhetoric of Restraint in *Heart of Darkness*," *Nineteenth Century Fiction*. V. 32 (1978): 320.
6. Conrad 144.
7. McClure 312.
8. McClure 319.
9. Conrad 123.
10. Conrad 154.
11. Haugh 52.
12. Conrad 52.
13. Conrad 87.
14. Haugh 50.
15. Conrad 113.
16. Gekoski 81.
17. Haugh 42.
18. Conrad 95.
19. McClure 320.
20. Marvin Mudrick, "The Originality of Conrad," *The Hudson Review*. v. 11 (1959): 549.
21. Lillian Feder, "Marlow's Descent into Hell," *Nineteenth Century Fiction*. v. 9 (1955) 291.
22. Conrad 149.
23. Gekoski 90.
24. Conrad 95.
25. Conrad 148.

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Readers' Comments on Alison Scott's Portfolio

Readers praised the range and maturity of the author's writing, and described her style as "fluid, vivid, even poetic." They were especially impressed with her narrative essay, with her ability to use metaphor to link apparently disparate objects and occurrences—a piano player, two AIDS victims, her personal perspective—to illuminate "the dark spaces between the lights." Her explanatory essay "deals with a complexity that I don't think I've seen in any portfolio since," writes one reader, going on to praise the writer's ability to "handle contradictions with clarity and resolve." Her literary analysis of *Heart of Darkness* is "tightly written," said one reader, a "sophisticated" explanation and resolution of the text's dualities. "Scott's writing has a professional quality," said one reader, "and her portfolio is one of the most memorable I've read."

Portfolio by Emily Carr

**Laurel School
Shaker Heights, Ohio**

Supervising Teacher: Jeanne B. Stephens

Author's Introduction

Imprinted upon my green and white field hockey jersey and inscribed upon my gold class ring is the Laurel tree, the traditional emblem of my high school. The security of the tree's roots and the solidity of its trunk represent the strong foundation of education that Laurel School provides. Sprouting branches of laurel leaves stretch from this fortitude, signifying the extension of this education into a greater realm of life. Although the picture of the Laurel tree has become an overused object for school paraphernalia, its symbolism continues to remain meaningful to me.

My experience at Laurel School has closely resembled the growth of the Laurel tree. Planted within a close-knit class of fifty-six girls and surrounded by a plethora of supportive teachers, my roots easily fastened themselves into a nutrient-rich community. My twelfth-grade English teacher, Mrs. Stephens, especially added to my development both by helping me to improve my writing and by encouraging me to discover a keener interest in literature. With this foundation, I hope that like a lush laurel tree, I, too, will continue to grow, spreading my branches and leaves ahead of me as I become a more knowledgeable and more educated person.

REFLECTIVE LETTER

Dear Miami University writing teachers,

As I searched through my English notebook trying to find a good example of an analysis of a literary text to submit in my portfolio, I needed to reread my

papers. Although many of these papers had received an "A," they still seemed incomplete and unfinished. The high grades filled me with a sense of pride and accomplishment; however, they did not prevent me from feeling dissatisfaction with my work. This emotion was not unusual. In truth, it struck me almost every time that I turned in an English paper, leaving me with nervous energy. Anxious, I would spend the rest of the day thinking of additional ideas or quotations that could have further emphasized my thesis. In all honesty, I do not believe that I have ever turned in a paper that I could truly call a final draft. When writing, I take great effort to be meticulous: collecting quotations, taking notes, formulating outlines, and writing rough drafts. But dutifully following this process does not guarantee me a perfect English paper, even if the grade indicates its excellence. Whereas a math problem always has a correct and single answer, in an English paper, an ideal answer does not exist. Because writing expresses personal thought, interpretation, and style, there is always another point of view, or another way to improve a paper. Although this at times leads me to a sense of frustration and self-criticism, it is also the element that draws me the most to writing.

English has seduced me: the more I write, the more it lures me. By never allowing me to feel completely satisfied, writing constantly inspires me to think deeper and to infinitely challenge myself. As it forces me to be more insightful, it captivates and engrosses me, becoming a necessary outlet for my own self-expression. When I read *Wuthering Heights*, the text that I have analyzed and am submitting for my portfolio, my head overflowed with emotion and deep thought that was waiting to be released. Writing contributed to the freedom of my mind as it enabled me to sort these ideas. However, as with all my papers, I could not help myself from questioning how I could have made the intricacy of my

thesis more comprehensible and my writing more eloquent. Even though my *Wuthering Heights* paper earned an "A+," a grade that supposedly marks perfection, it still yearned for improvement. Discontented, I was forced to push myself further, to reach for new levels of understanding. This is what makes English so inviting. This is what has grasped me. Whether it is a natural drive for unattainable perfection, the desire to think at an ultimate capacity, or even part obsession, I am joyously and irreversibly attached to writing.

A SELF-EXPRESSION

Within a large performance hall, I sat in a red velvet seat waiting anxiously for the enormous curtain to rise. Surrounded by the low rumble of voices, I watched the ushers escort people to their seats and listened to the musicians as they tuned their instruments. I laughed to myself in recollection when seeing the twinkle in the eyes of little girls seeing a ballet for their first time. Having taken ballet since age four, I had been able to both see and participate in many wonderful performances. Although I had this opportunity, I had not yet seen *Swan Lake*. I was finally going to see it. I, too, felt the kind of excitement that I had had when seeing my first ballet. Knowing the music of Tchaikovsky and having read story books of *Swan Lake* with beautiful illustrations, I pictured the scene that was about to take place. I imagined graceful dancers, elegant swans dressed in white tutus leaping and twirling across the stage. When the lights dimmed and the massive curtain rose, not only did my imagination become a reality, but the ballet stirred up much emotion and past memories, causing me to make a significant realization about myself as a dancer.

As the music and the dancers came together harmoniously, a surge of feeling rushed through me. The lively music of Tchaikovsky penetrated me with its beautiful sound, almost urging me to stand up and dance. The dancers moved with the music, as though they were completely consumed by it. They were perfectly exquisite creatures who seemed naturally suited to play swans. As they moved in unison, the dancers' movements were clean and faultless as they effortlessly turned on their point shoes and glided across the stage. But when I saw Cynthia Gregory, internationally famous for her performance as the Swan Queen, I was awe-struck by her musicality, self-expression, and grace. Captivated by her performance, I was overwhelmed with emotion which I could not control. My tears ran freely down my cheeks as I watched her in appreciation and self-discovery.

About a half a year earlier, I had had to make a very difficult decision about my dance career, one that would affect the course of my life. While intensively studying at the Cleveland School of Ballet, I increasingly felt a need to choose between a life dedicated solely to a professional dance career or a life which would allow a well-rounded high school and college experience. As I decided on the latter, I immediately became involved in many of the activities, such as field hockey, that I had always wanted to do. Although I did not regret my decision, I began to develop an almost bitter attitude toward my dancing. I no longer felt that there was a place for me in the dance world. There were two options: either I devote myself entirely to dance and become a professional dancer, or not dance at all. I did not believe that a compromise existed. I feared watching my skills, agility, and technique fade away if I were to study ballet less seriously. This would be a degradation to me, seeing my best talent deteriorate. Because I was no longer studying to be a professional, I felt like a quitter, and therefore, could no longer

identify myself as a dancer.

As I watched *Swan Lake* through blurred eyes, I realized that dancing would always be a part of me, even though I had decided against a professional career. My abundance of emotion came not from regret but rather from a sense of artistic understanding of the dancers. With both physical and mental concentration, Cynthia Gregory used her whole self to portray the most beautiful interpretation of a swan I had ever imagined possible. In every step, she showed her endless love of dance. As she whirled across the stage, I understood the joy and self-satisfaction she gained by freely expressing herself. I was able to recognize her emotion because I have also experienced the same rewarding feeling when dancing. I then understood that it was this expression of the spirit and the happiness one obtains from it that labels one a dancer.

Although I am no longer training to be a professional dancer, I still derive pleasure from expressing myself when I dance. My technique may not be as precise as it once was, but my love for dance remains the same. To describe this almost spiritual emotion that a dancer feels, Cynthia Gregory said, "Sometimes that happens, when I come out of myself and things happen on stage that seem impossible to me. I guess it's from a lot of hard work, but I think I was just meant to dance, and God is holding me up." Watching *Swan Lake* and Cynthia Gregory made me realize that I could still be a good dancer without having to be a professional. I still want to work hard and challenge myself when dancing but not at such an all-consuming level. Like Cynthia Gregory, I feel that I was meant to dance because of the contentment that it gives me.

OBJECTIFICATION

On our senior cut day, my class of fifty-six girls set out on an adventurous scavenger hunt. Headed toward University School, my friends and I prepared to complete the most daring task of the expedition: having our bra straps signed. When we arrived at the campus, we immediately bumped into the handsome, smart, and slightly egotistical captain of the football team. Once we stated our mission, he casually pulled out his pen. But as we all lined up at his side to have our bras signed, uneasiness began to creep through me. Reviewing this situation, I could only see giggling girls meekly waiting to be marked by their owner. For a moment, I felt more like an object being branded than a human being. By asking boys to sign our bras, we encouraged and invited them to talk about and to evaluate our bodies. However, I failed to express my concern in fear that I would spoil the camaraderie of the entire day. I could just picture my friends' reactions: they would roll their eyes while telling me to lighten up. There was a time when this incident might have meant no more than a prank to me. But having taken an English elective on racism, I could only relate this experience to a theme we thoroughly examined in class: the objectification of women.

As objectification dehumanizes women, it also makes assumptions that they are like dreamy and mindless illusions. Within the depths of the jungle, Marlow, the central character in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, encounters "a gorgeous apparition of a woman" (136). By referring to this woman as a kind of ghost, Marlow implies that she is unearthly and unreal. Rather than accepting her as true African woman, he envisions her as an exotic goddess. Uplifted, she is removed into her own world where she lives as a creature of the wilderness and

an object of fantasy. As women, like this African deity, are idolized and adored for their "gorgeous" bodies, they become sex symbols rather than human beings. As worshipped objects, they lack a sense of reality and human substance.

Not only are women dehumanized by elevation, but women are also minimized to objects of possession. In her novel *Their Eyes Are Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston illustrates this type of objectification through the antagonist, Joe Starks, who says, "Somebody got to think for women and chillun and chicken and cows. I god, they sho don't think none themselves" (67). Not only does Joe believe that women are property, but he is convinced that they are as dependent as children and as ignorant as cows. Assuming that women's incapacities yearn for his guidance, Joe takes on the role of the owner and the protector of his property, or his wife. As their "owners" feel the need to speak and to think for them, women are silenced and reduced to mindless material.

By having my bra signed, I was reconfirming these blind assumptions about females. Encouraging my own objectification contradicted important values in my life about the equality of women. While I lost a sense of self-respect in this experience, I gained a more questioning disposition on the objectification of women. Now, I cannot help but see that everyday events and publications, like beauty pageants and womens' magazines, put women on display as objects. Although this may be either a trifling concern or a complete unawareness for many, objectification is undeniably humiliating for all women.

BEYOND BOUNDARIES

When Heathcliff, "a dirty, ragged" (41), black-haired child, was brought to Wuthering Heights, he soon became very "thick" (42) with Cathy. As they grew up

together at the Heights, they were tyrannized by a harsh and vindictive Hindley. In this oppressive atmosphere, Heathcliff and Cathy developed a bond that sprouted from their common misery and defiant nature.

Cathy reveals this deep-rooted attached by saying "I am Heathcliff!" (84). She identifies herself as Heathcliff because he supplements her own completeness. Dependent on him for the fulfillment of her own person, she expresses a kind of selflessness, a condition she admits by saying, "He's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same" (82). By denying her own individuality, Cathy implies that to be whole, she needs Heathcliff as much as she needs herself. She yearns for him because he is her foundation, or her soul. Heathcliff also needs Cathy for the contentment of his life and the gratification of his own soul. Implying that his entity depends on Cathy, Heathcliff says, "You know that I could as soon forget you as my own existence" (156). However, it is their souls, not their physical bodies that crave unity. Thus, Cathy and Heathcliff can only be truly satisfied when their souls are together. When Cathy dies, Heathcliff questions how he can live when his "soul is in the grave" (158). Although his body lives, he is internally dead. Without Cathy or his soul, he lacks vitality and a worthwhile reason to stay alive. But his soul is not lost from him forever; rather, it is attainable by reunification with Cathy. In this sense, the only way for him to live and to obtain his soul is to die. For Heathcliff, there is no boundary between life and death or between himself and Cathy since it is the possession of one's own soul that is really living.

Because Cathy and Heathcliff share a soul, there are few boundaries that separate them, and they defy any they find. They are, in fact, so much the same person that they have an androgynous relationship. As children, Heathcliff and Cathy dress in the same pinafores and sleep together in the same oak-panelled

bed. With little differentiation between them, Cathy and Heathcliff have a complete and sexless unity. They seemingly do not have boundaries that divide them into two individuals; they are able to penetrate one another and share the same soul. To highlight the lack of boundaries, Bronte makes many references to windows in *Wuthering Heights*. When Heathcliff throws hot apple sauce at Linton, he is punished and locked up in his room. But this does not prevent Cathy from reaching him. By climbing through a window, Cathy is inside the room rather on the outside. Slipping through this barricade, she symbolically passes through the boundary of Heathcliff's body and becomes one with him. There, they can totally feel the anger and the injustice together. Ellen approaches this room and says, "Instead of finding her on the outside, I heard a voice within" (63). This shows that Cathy has penetrated Heathcliff and their souls have joined.

Because their souls are connected, Heathcliff and Catherine disregard their own bodies. With the ability to penetrate one another and to become one, their own physical bodies are unimportant to them. Before her death, Cathy and Heathcliff roughly embrace: "She retained in her closed fingers a portion of the locks she had been grasping," and "so inadequate was his stock of gentleness to the requirements of her condition, that on his letting go [Nelly] saw four distinct impressions left in the colorless skin" (156). The brutality revealed in this scene shows that they both neglect their own bodies when they are together. Because their embrace is a union of their souls, their bodies become insignificant and their physical pain meaningless. Desperately trying to hold on to his soul and his last chance of life, Heathcliff unmercifully squeezes Cathy. Meanwhile as Cathy yanks his hair, he unresponsively reacts to physical mutilation because for him, being complete does not relate to the condition of his body. Indeed, before his own death, Heathcliff entirely ignores the needs of his body. Fasting and abstaining

from sleep, he hungers for another kind of sustenance and rest. Instead of eating the food placed in front of him, Heathcliff "laid [his hands] on the table, looked eagerly towards the window, then rose and went out" (310). Distracted by Cathy's enticing ghost, Heathcliff sees his own soul before him. Her spirit feeds him this soul, the only element that will truly give him life. After seeing this vision of Cathy, Heathcliff, with an "unnatural appearance of joy under his brows," says "I am animated with hunger, and seemingly I must not eat" (311). Heathcliff's excitement comes from the presence of Cathy's ghost. He hungers for her spirit rather than the food on his plate. Ironically, he must starve himself and avoid sleep in order to feed his soul and to attain rest.

By neglecting his body, Heathcliff shows that real living is the attainment of one's soul, unrelated to whether the body is alive or dead. When Cathy died, "she devoured [his] existence" (308), tearing away his soul and leaving only his hollow and lifeless shell. Without vindictiveness, which served as a temporary substitute for his soul, Heathcliff lacks the will power to sustain himself and his body, saying, "I have to remind myself to breathe—almost to remind my heart to beat!" (308). However, as Heathcliff begins to see Cathy's ghost, "He has a strange joyful glitter in his eyes" (310) as though the presence of her spirit is refilling him with vivacity. But the more her spirit feeds him, the more deathly-looking and weak his body becomes. Heathcliff's body acts as the barrier between himself and Cathy. "Dissolving" (274) and disregarding the body, therefore, makes him closer to Cathy or, closer to his own life. Ironically, Cathy who is dead, cannot really die or "be at peace" (156), while Heathcliff, who is alive, cannot live with his soul "in the grave" (158). Thus living for Heathcliff and Cathy ultimately depends on unification of their souls, rather than the state of their bodies.

Because living and dying seem to overlap, there is no definite boundary or

line, other than the presence of the body, between life and death. Symbolically, Heathcliff, in the novel's opening pages, first sees Cathy's ghost through a window. As windows seem to represent the open pathway between Heathcliff and Cathy's souls, they also signify an unmarked channel between life and death. For eighteen years, Heathcliff and Cathy have lingered in this abysmal passageway, both unsatisfied with their incompleteness. Cathy's ghostliness shows that there is still a part of her that remains alive. By communicating with Heathcliff, she freely floats between life and death. One evening, on the verge of Heathcliff's death, Ellen hears him "muttering detached words," including "Catherine," "spoken as one would speak to a person present" (315). By speaking with one another, both Cathy and Heathcliff break the boundary that separates the living from the dead. Heathcliff, with his empty and soulless body, says, "Today, I am in sight of my heaven. I have my eyes on it, hardly three feet to sever me!" (p. 311). Beholding Cathy, his idea of heaven, Heathcliff actually sees heaven before his death. In doing so, he travels beyond life and into death, experiencing both simultaneously. Dangling in this barren desert halfway between life and death, Heathcliff says, "I'm too happy and yet I'm not happy enough. My soul's bliss kills my body, but does not satisfy itself" (316). The sight of Cathy, his heaven and his happiness, illuminates Heathcliff. But with the barrier of his body, Heathcliff can only look at his soul, not merge with it. Only by destroying his body and "dissolving with her" (274), can Heathcliff pass through the boundary into Cathy's world. Once their souls melt together, Heathcliff will be "more happy still" (274).

Within a short time, Heathcliff dies. Ellen recalls trying unsuccessfully to close his eyes, trying "to extinguish, if possible, that frightful, lifelike gaze of exultation" (318). Although his body is dead, his life-like expression portrays his triumphant return to Cathy, along with the restoration of his fragmented soul.

Lying in the oak-panelled bed, he has become one again with Cathy. Like a child, he has regained the singularity that they had shared. As "the lattice flaps to and fro" (318), Cathy and Heathcliff have completely penetrated the passageway between them. Without the constraint of his body, Heathcliff easily slips away through the window, the open pathway between life and death. But the window does not reseal itself, as to separate his life and his death. Instead it flaps freely, to show that Heathcliff's life is not over. Reunited with Cathy and his soul, Heathcliff is, in fact, more alive. As he continues to live, Heathcliff shows that the death of the body is not the boundary, or end of life. Instead, with the attainment of his soul, he will live forever. While Mr. Lockwood walks through the kirk, he observes that Cathy's grave is "buried in heath" (320). Heath, perhaps symbolic for Heathcliff, is a shrub that grows in barren places. As it spreads upon Cathy's grave, it as though Heathcliff has entered and spread himself through Cathy's soul. As this shrub is able to thrive on a barren place like a grave, Heathcliff shows that death, also thought to be dismal, is full of life.

Readers' Comments on Emily Carr's Portfolio

"Emily's writing is at first deceptive because it seems so straightforward and simple, but if you read and listen carefully, you'll hear the intensity she brings to it." Readers were impressed with the author's ability to stand back and examine herself both as a writer and as a person. They commented on the maturity of her narrative and her ability in "Objectification" to "scrutinize" the events in her life and "critique her part in a larger social system that encourages sexism." They were particularly impressed by her textual analysis. One praised the "smooth integration of text" with analysis; another said, "She shows an intelligent, clear understanding of how writers use sometimes subtle imagery to underscore themes." A third said simply, "Her literary analysis is one of the most thorough and complete I've seen."

Portfolio by Kristin Hinkle

**Hinsdale Central High School
Hinsdale, Illinois**

Supervising Teacher: Josephine D. Lewis

Author's Introduction

Hi! My name is Krissy Hinkle and I'm a zoology major at Miami. I graduated from Hinsdale Central High School in Hinsdale, Illinois—a western suburb of Chicago. So far, I'm really enjoying college life and all the exciting new experiences I've had.

I love music and reading poetry. I make jewelry and play beach volleyball whenever I can. I'm most happy, though, taking my dog for a walk or hanging out with my friends. Those are the times I feel most myself. Similarly, I'm only happy with writing that reflects an author's true self because only then their voice can be heard.

I want to thank the Hinsdale Central English Department for their guidance and Mr. B. for helping me find my voice.

REFLECTIVE LETTER

Miami University writing teachers:

Writing has been an important part of my life, especially this past year. In the last two semesters of my high school career I took four English classes (A.P. British Literature I & II, Creative Writing, and Cinema Studies) which required me to write more than ever and to experiment with different styles and subjects.

The paper I am using for an analysis of a written text originated in my A.P.

British Literature I class. I read a great number of Shakespeare's histories and my teacher encouraged me to find a universal theme and follow it through several of the plays. I decided to write about Shakespeare's use of sun imagery. Most of the arguments I read contended that the image of the sun was used to glorify the upper classes, yet when I read the plays I was struck by how the sun was often connected with negative aspects of a person. I used material mainly from *Henry IV, Part 1* and *Richard II* to argue my thesis.

For my story or description I choose to write about something I know well—my front yard. It is written to appeal to all the senses and to convey the quiet peace of summer.

Thank you.

WAITING FOR THE MAIL

The cicadas call to one another, their cries rising with an urgency and then falling slowly to a distant hum. I sit in the only shade, feeling the rough edge of the concrete step scratch my bare foot; listening, sometimes talking, but mainly waiting for the mail. To my right a hulking star magnolia, a tree which was only supposed to be a shrub, is in the process of opening its flowers. Their sweet scent comes gently when the wind blows. In the opposite direction, close at hand, lies a hose. I keep it ready for action, to combat any of the neighborhood midgets who might be in the mood for a water fight. All around the hose grow a dark, waxy ivy, and above the ivy grow evergreens pruned in various shapes and also a single Shadblow, with its red berries.

Below, at the bottom of the steps, a solitary petunia blooms between the bricks in the sidewalk. It has somehow managed to take root in the sand and

gravel, tilting its two hot pink blossoms toward the east, living in constant danger of being trampled.

Past the sidewalk spreads an expanse of grass, then my mother's garden, then finally the street. Lizzie and Stephie stand in the grass, far to the right, almost to the driveway, hands on hips. Both are dressed in pastel shorts and matching shirts. Lizzie, my next door neighbor, has the distinction of looking like Vanna White at age seven. They are trying to coerce my lab, Bess, into chasing a tennis ball: one of the five or more that constantly decorate our yard in various states of decay. Stephie starts to pick one of the balls up, but quickly drops it when she realizes that it is soggy from being in Bess' mouth. In the end she opts to kick it with one of her dirty white Keds. The ball whizzes past Bess and almost hits the old weathered fence which separates front from side yard, but Bess takes no notice. She has found a much more pleasant sport. As the cicada sun themselves in the garden she grazes, eating them directly off the Hosta lily's leaves. My father, thinking she should work more for her supper, begins picking cicadas up by their translucent wings and tossing them to Bess, who catches them in her mouth.

Joe, the mailman, finally arrives, looking rather like a leprechaun—wearing blue bermuda shorts—his bald head shines with sweat and his beard looks a little more bushy than usual. He stops for a few moments to pet Bess (he is the first mailman I have ever known to like dogs) and to talk about the invasion of happy-go-lucky bugs. Finally, he hands over a pile of junk mail and only a few items of any significance.

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT

I met my first vampire when I was twelve. Appearing nightly under the billing of "Count Dracula," he would charm his victims, as well as the audience, with his hypnotic evilness. I entered the rickety Colorado theater prepared to be engaged and scared, but I didn't expect to be swept off my feet—yet I was. Like other transient interests of youth, the Count captured my imagination for awhile and then slowly faded away. A few years later, I stumbled upon Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* which instantly resurrected my interest in the living dead. Immediately, I began devouring them and found that even though both Dracula and Anne Rice's creations are of the same species (they must drink blood and sleep during the day to survive), they have essential differences that separate them into entirely different breeds.

My first infatuation, Count Dracula, is a classic and somewhat conventional bloodsucker. Vestal virgins and other such excruciatingly pure people are the only items on his menu. However, he must not have a large appetite because he can't finish a person in a single setting. It takes him a total of three meals to complete his evil deed, and during that time his victims are likely to go mad and kill themselves. If he ever does manage to drain a victim dry, this poor soul is destined to become immortal like Dracula and rise from the grave to hopelessly wander the earth. When encountering any religious objects which a potential victim may possess, the Count does something hokey and staged such as leap backwards in horror, hiss and cover his face with his cape. With his usual flair for the dramatic, Dracula then hurls curses at his lost victim and flees.

Although Dracula has made many people into vampires throughout eternity, loneliness doesn't seem to be his motivation. Never has the Count made

an effort to create a coven or to pass on any of his knowledge to his "children." Also, unfortunately for Dracula, he makes it incredibly easy for his enemies to kill him. Habitually leaving his coffin sitting out in the basement of some castle, he leaves no human lookouts, whom he could easily control with his hypnotic power. Once a prospective killer locates the coffin, all he need do is drive a stake through Dracula's heart, and that vampire will be no more.

My second infatuation, Anne Rice's vampires, are modern and suave. Considerably more gruesome and powerful than Count Dracula, these bloodsuckers feed on anyone, anytime, anywhere. Having a gluttonous appetite, they drain a victim to the point of death and then move on to their next adventure or victim. Some of these creatures get so hungry that they will dine on two or three victims a night. Unlike Dracula's discriminating tastes, most of Anne Rice's vampires use no discretion in choosing their victims. However, the more conscientious blood drinkers hunt down the "vermin" of humanity, and when one of these crusading vampires appears on the scene, pimps and drug dealers start "mysteriously" dying. Other kinds of vermin are also dinner fare for these freaks of nature. For instance, on long sea voyages, vampires can survive in elegance by catching the ship's rats, slitting their throats and drinking their blood out of delicate glass goblets. Not only does this save the crew from a bloody death, but it keeps the ship much cleaner, too.

Furthermore, these modernized bloodsuckers are extremely picky about whom they choose to become one of them. Once the perfect candidate has been chosen, he is drained to the point of death by his vampiric creator and then induced to drink a vampire's blood. Unlike Dracula, most of these pitiful creatures are gregarious and wish to be with other vampires, so they form coven houses to combat their loneliness and to keep each other company through their

eternal damnation.

Unlike Dracula, crosses, holy water, and churches have no effect on these creatures of the night. To them, these holy relics are just beautiful pieces of art. In one Anne Rice novel, for example, two vampires spent the night under the alter of a church and then emerged like spirits during a mass.

While driving a stake through Count Dracula's heart will kill him, doing so to one of these victims will do nothing but create a huge, bloody mess. Destroying one of these immortals is a difficult task. The only way to do this is to burn him and then scatter the ashes. Most vampires, who don't have a death wish, won't stand around and let themselves be incinerated so the destroyer must physically trap the doomed vampire in the place of execution. The importance of scattering the ashes cannot be overstressed. If this is not properly done, the persecutor will become the persecuted and have to face a scar-covered demon (whose unscattered ashes reformed into a body) looking for revenge.

I still enjoy seeing the old Bela Lugosi movies, and the immortal words, "I want to suck your blood," will eternally be etched in my mind. He was the first great vampire, but compared to Anne Rice's creatures he seems dated and old-fashioned. Anne Rice's vampires are becoming the new classic, and with their hypnotic and modern approach they will someday overshadow Dracula.

THE SUN AND NOBILITY

We live in an age that is infatuated with the sun. Our era thinks of the sun as a symbol of relaxation, wealth, and the good life. However difficult these ideals are to obtain, they are generally quite harmless. On the surface, it would appear

that the sun represented the same things in Shakespeare's time, but when looking under the surface I find the sun to represent less benevolent qualities. The sun images in Shakespeare's histories generally refer to nobility, but not to their glory. Instead the images illuminate the darker qualities that royalty possesses.

When referring to King Henry IV or Prince Hal, the sun represents their royal deceit. Falstaff, for one, can see the faults in Hal's royal character and states this metaphorically, saying:

Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove
A micher and eat blackberries? A question not to be asked.
Shall the son of England prove a thief and take purses?
A question to be asked. (1 Henry IV: II,ii ln. 345)

Prince Hal is a truant and a thief, who is purposely spending time with lower class citizens to glorify himself when the appropriate time comes. He even admits:

Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That, when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wondered at
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapors that did seem to strangle him.
(1 Henry IV: I,ii ln. 164)

He freely uses people for his own purposes without the slightest remorse. A prime example of this is after his coronation when he refuses to admit he even recognizes Falstaff.

Hal's father also uses the sun as a symbol of self-glorification. Henry IV lectures Hal about how to make oneself appear great to the general public.

He was but a cuckoo in June,
 Heard, not regarded, seen, but with such eyes
 As, sick and blunted with community,
 Afford no extraordinary gaze
 Such as is bent of sunlike majesty
 When it shines seldom in admiring eyes,
 But rather drowsed and hung their eyelids down,
 Slept in his face and rendered such aspect
 As cloudy men use to their adversaries,
 Being with his presence gluttoned, gorged, and full.
 (1 Henry IV: III, ii ln. 75)

Henry IV hides himself from the public eye to pique their interest in him, just as the sun becomes more desired when it is seldom seen. In these cases, the sun imagery represents how deceptive Henry IV and Hal are.

The sun image also represents the power that the position of king wields. Before he becomes king, Bolingbroke expresses his lust for Richard II's power.

Your will be done: this must my comfort be,
 That sun that warms you here shall shine on me,
 And those his golden beams to you here lint
 Shall point on me, and gild my banishment.
 (Richard II: I, iii ln. 143)

Bolingbroke believes that when he becomes king all power that was once Richard's will be transferred to him, and he will become as powerful as the brilliant sun. Believing he was meant to be king; he ruthlessly does anything to obtain this power.

Not only does the sun represent kingly power but also kingly favor. Lancaster reminds the Archbishop of what the king's favor has done for him and warns him of the consequences of losing this favor.

That man that sits within a monarch's heart
 And ripens in the sunshine of his favor,
 Would he abuse the countenance of the King,
 Alack, what mischiefs might he set abroad.

When a subject is in the king's favor, he is bathed and nurtured in his warmth, but there is always a chance that the favor may disappear like the sun going behind clouds.

Finally, Shakespeare uses the sun to represent the king's ultimate power—the power to dictate whether a man shall live or die. Richard II laments his loss over life and death soon after Bolingbroke gains control of the kingdom.

O, that I were a mockery king of snow,
Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke,
To melt myself away in water drops!
(Richard II: IV, i ln. 259)

Queen Margaret comments on Richard III's newly gained power to control subjects' lives which he usurped from her son.

And turns the sun to shade, alas! alas!
Witness my son, now in the shade of death,
Whose bright outshining beams thy cloudy wrath
Hath in eternal darkness folded up.
Your aerie buildeth in our aerie's nest.
(Richard III: I, iii ln. 264)

Salisbury comments to Richard II:

I see thy glory like a shooting star
Fall to the base earth from the firmament;
Thy sun sets weeping in the lowly west,
Witnessing storms to come, woe and unrest;
Thy friends are fled to wait upon thy foes,
And crossly to thy good all fortune goes.
(Richard II: II, iv ln. 19)

He is describing Richard's loss of support and power. His sun is nearly set, giving no warmth to his followers.

To the average groundling in Shakespeare's time, the sun must have represented many of the same glorious ideals we associate with it now. But Shakespeare's sun imagery is full of deception, lust for power, favoritism, and the

ultimate power of being able to control other's lives. The sun image illustrates the negative aspects of nobility that would be found anytime, anywhere.

Readers' Comments on Kristin Hinkle's Portfolio

The author's sensitivity to detail is evident throughout this portfolio, from the "tilt" of the hot-pink petunia blossom to the "discriminating" appetite of classical vampires, to the dark qualities of the sun and royalty in Shakespeare. Readers commented on the sense of suspended time in the narrative, the significance of the details, and the fine twist on "significance" at the end of the essay. The subdued, sometimes wry humor of the explanatory piece was described by one reader as "sophisticated and masterful." "It made me laugh out loud," another reader responded. Readers were also impressed by the writer's ability to look below the surface of metaphors in Shakespeare, to explore the complexity of imagery of the sun. "The idea isn't readily apparent," one reader wrote, "but she followed it through to an interesting reading, a new perspective."

Portfolio by Christopher Bosche

**Parkway Central High School
Chesterfield, Missouri
Supervising Teacher: Lou Jobst**

Author's Introduction

Hi there! My name is Chris Bosche and I'm from St. Louis, Missouri. I am currently a pre-med/microbiology major and I hope to become an emergency-room physician. I graduated from Parkway Central High School in Chesterfield, where I wrote for the school newspaper and was a member of the marching band.

I borrow my philosophy of life from the classic Jimmy Buffet song *Changes in Latitudes*, in which he says that "if we couldn't laugh we would all go insane." I have an over-active sense of humor, and I tend to see the lighter side of just about everything. I try to add a humorous aspect to anything I write.

Despite the fact that I locked myself out of my room wearing only a towel at orientation, I am finally getting used to college life. I look forward to spending my next four years here at Miami.

I would like to dedicate this portfolio to my family and friends back home.

REFLECTIVE LETTER

Writing is truly a unique form of communication. It allows you to explore an imaginary world where anything is possible as long as it exists in the realm of your imagination. A writer can exhibit complete control over the world in which his story resides. I first discovered this back in tenth grade when my English teacher assigned a composition that was to be a short story. I enjoy adding a bit of

humor to my compositions, so I seized the opportunity to write "Instant Justice."

I am not known for my physical strength or my athletic abilities, so I thought it would be humorous to write an "autobiographical" story in which I placed myself in the character of a crime-fighting hero, like those in the action movies that my friends and I are so fond of. I soon realized that anyone could overpower three hundred ninjas with machine guns armed only with a pen and a healthy imagination. I then decided to include the names of all my teachers, and to give their characters a part that would suit their true-life personalities. Hence, my jazz band teacher, Mr. Hoover, became the owner of a shady jazz club, while my English teacher, Mrs. Cossarini, became an Italian mobster. While some of the humor consists of things relevant to my school, I feel that it is my greatest example of short story composition that I produced during my four years in high school. I have enclosed the shorter sequel, *The Punisher in Paradise*.

Throughout history, writing has been used as a way to communicate one's opinion. I used this style of writing many times as an editorial writer for my school newspaper, *The Corral*. I am not the quickest debater in the world, so I enjoy the way writing allows you the time to prepare and organize all of your arguments before offering them to public scrutiny. As an example of an explanatory essay, I have enclosed a copy of an editorial I wrote last fall concerning the stand-off in the Gulf. The imminent war was a hotly contested issue at my school, and I believe that I expressed my opinions in a way that also provided factual information so that the reader could understand how I perceived the situation and how I arrived at the conclusions that I did.

The final piece of writing that I have enclosed is an analysis of Charles Dickens' classic, *Hard Times*. The thesis that I set out to prove was that Dickens' book was more than just a story, but a forum in which he advocated radical social

and economic change. I feel that this essay is a typical example of the five paragraph, written response tests that we take after each book that we read.

In conclusion, I feel that writing is a major part of my life. In my years of schooling, it has helped me to broaden my imagination and view life in a different way. Whether it's satirical, opinionated or analytical, writing forces the author to interpret what he/she knows and then to use his/her mind to discover a way of communicating the knowledge to others.

DRUGS, BULLETS, AND PALM TREES: THE PUNISHER IN PARADISE

After months of detective work, it was time for a vacation. I was giving up the crime and corruption of the city for the sun and surf of beautiful Hawaii. Most call me "The Punisher," but my real name is Bosche. I fight crime.

My presidential suite atop the Kahala Hilton provided a spectacular view of the ocean and downtown Hawaii. It had taken some persuading, but the airline had finally allowed me to bring my guns and martial arts paraphernalia to the islands. It was too bad that my Ferrari GTS convertible couldn't make the journey, but the rental car company had furnished me with a new, silver Jaguar XJS convertible to ease the pain. I was reclining in my suite's whirlpool spa when the phone rang.

"Is this 'The Punisher?'" the voice on the phone asked.

"Who wants to know?" I replied coldly.

"This is Detective Jobst from Hawaii 5-0. We have reason to believe that pro-Iraqi terrorists, headed by the evil Dr. Buss, are planning to assassinate

President Wesselman when she comes to visit next week. We figured that a world-famous crime fighter like yourself could possibly help us to stop this horrible act. What do you say?"

I despise terrorism with a passion, so I jumped at the chance to rid the world of some cowardly thugs. "Tell your boss that 'The Punisher' is on the case."

It was shortly after three p.m. when my sleek European driving machine pulled into the parking lot at police headquarters. Detective Jobst met me at the curb. "Nice car," he said as he led me past security into the famed 5-0 precinct of the Hawaiian Police Department. Once inside, we joined several other of Hawaii's finest in a meeting room.

"Aloha, gentlemen," I said.

"Wow! I never thought that I would get to meet the world-famous 'Punisher' in my lifetime. It's an honor to work with you," replied chief Henderson. "Let's get down to business, shall we?"

"This is what we know," the chief began. Last week, a woman was stopped for speeding. Later that day, an anonymous phone tip informed us that the President was to be assassinated during her visit next week by Middle Eastern terrorists. We have now determined that the woman stopped for speeding was the infamous terrorist V. Michael. For the past ten years, she has run an elite terrorist unit for Dr. Buss. She specializes in making bombs. We have no leads as to her location, but we believe she is somewhere in the Honolulu area. We must destroy this evil plot, if it exists, before next week."

"Ah," I said. "Not for any far-flung friend, but by myself and for myself I'll tear this plot to tatters. For, who knows, tomorrow this selfsame murderer may turn his bloody hands on me. The cause of the President therefore is my own."

This would be a tough case. All I had to go on was that an elite squad of killers happened to be running loose in Honolulu only days before the President was to arrive. My vacation would have to wait. I had only one week to figure out what was going on. Come on evil-doers—make my semester.

I decided to find out what the word on the street was. Luckily, my informant pal Mouse Hoover was in town to promote the opening of his new Jazz club in Waikiki. Mouse's was a shady place where the thugs of the city gathered to make their deals in the smoke-filled room that buzzed with the sounds of hot jazz being played live on stage. It was not wise to enter unless you knew how to use your fists. My fist was clenching my .357 traveling companion concealed under my trenchcoat.

The bouncer at the door refused to let me in, but a swift spin-kick to the ribs persuaded him to change his mind. I made my way through the hazy, dimly lit bar to Mouse's office. Mouse's insider schemes were legendary, and for years he had been my eyes on the street. He seemed to have this uncanny ability to raise large sums of money quickly. The name Mouse referred not only to his size, but also to his fondness for band cheese.

Not bothering to knock, I kicked in the door. "What the..." Mouse screamed, infuriated. As he looked up, he realized that it was me and he lowered his tone. "Hi, Punisher! Don't worry about the door, I'll fix it later. Come on in! How do you like my new place? I hope you didn't hurt Butch outside, did you?"

"What do you know about a plot to assassinate the president, Mouse?" I interrupted.

"I don't think I know anything," came his weak reply. As I stepped toward him, he quickly changed his tune. "Oh! The President! Now I remember. Last week Dr. Buss and some of his goons were in here talking about killing the

President. One of them mentioned something about staying at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel here in Waikiki. That's all I know."

After I jammed on sax with Mouse's top notch jazz band, the bruised and humbled bouncer opened the door for me and I left the club. It was still early in the evening so I decided to go to the Royal Hawaiian.

The bright-pink hotel is a Hawaiian landmark, so I had no trouble finding it. As I pulled up, I was besieged by valets who wanted to park my fine automobile. I tossed them the keys and proceeded to enter the lobby. I had been there only a few minutes when I ran into famed newspaper columnist Debby Boyle. She had done several stories on my incredible crime-fighting skills, but recently she had been doing a series of stories against President Wesselman's policies in the Middle East.

"Why, if it isn't the Punisher!" she said, obviously happy to see me. "What is the world's greatest detective doing in Hawaii?"

"It's strictly business, I assure you," I replied. "How about yourself?" I continued, uninterested.

"I get to cover the arrival of the President next week! I'm so excited!"

"Why are you here so early?" I asked.

"I felt I needed a little vacation. I am having a great time, too. Today I visited the Fern Grotto and Pearl Harbor. Yesterday, I took hula lessons from this real Hawaiian girl, and I bought a grass skirt..." I could see this conversation was going nowhere, so I excused myself to save my sanity.

I went to the front desk and asked if a Buss or Michael were registered at the Hotel, but the beautiful, blonde receptionist told me that there was not. She stared at me glassy-eyed. "Thank you," I said coolly, winking at her. She smiled and then fainted. I loved doing that.

I retrieved the Jag and headed for my hotel. I was in the parking lot when suddenly a car pulled up. As I stopped, ten ninjas jumped out in full black oriental garb. Each brandished a deadly weapon of destruction. I quickly retrieved my trusty .357 magnum and plugged two at close range. Two more grabbed me from behind, but I managed to off them by flipping them over my shoulder, sending them crashing onto the pavement. Three of the remaining six charged me from the front, but a series of swift kicks below the beltline sent them howling in pain. They all jumped back into the car and sped away. Someone wanted me off this case.

The next day I had the computer run a check on aliases used by Buss and his gang. The name "Schuermann" seemed to be Buss's fake name of choice. I went back to the Royal Hawaiian to visit my friend, the receptionist. She told me that there were several rooms rented to a Mr. Schuermann on the sixth floor and that Debby Boyle occupied one of them. I was getting somewhere.

The computer had also informed me that Buss owned a mansion in the mountains overlooking the city. It was heavily fortified with ninja guards and a large iron fence. It was time to bust this case wide open.

I called 5-0 and told them to pick up Boyle for questioning. I would storm the Buss mansion myself. I quickly donned my fatigues and loaded up on weapons and ammunition. I then proceeded to Mouse's, where he arranged for me to receive an all-terrain assault vehicle. Sirens blaring, I headed into the hills.

I reached the mansion just after dark and I quickly scaled the fence, landing in a courtyard full of angry ninjas. My hands reached into my duffel to pull out two Uzi submachine guns and a handful of grenades. It was time to rock and roll. In five minutes, 200 ninjas lay dead or dying, and I was inside of the

house. The homicide boys at 5-0 were going to love this one.

I dashed upstairs to find Buss, Michael, and the rest of the gang cowering in the study. I blasted through the door, guns blazing. "Please don't hurt us," they pleaded, throwing down their weapons. "We give up!" I just growled and flexed my bulging biceps. They all passed out.

The next day, the news was all over the world and I was a national hero...again. Boyle had confessed to working with the Buss gang on a plot to kill the President. She would have planted a bomb during her interview and she probably would have gotten away with it. Her only problem was that she didn't count on the Punisher.

I spent the next week hanging out with the thousands of bikini-clad babes that inhabit the beaches of beautiful Hawaii. My vacation is over and I am back at work. Bad guys take heed—the Punisher is on the prowl. My name is Bosche, I fight crime.

About the Author:

When Bosche is not attending Parkway Central High School, he divides his time between crime-fighting and training CIA agents. His hobbies include Full Scale Kickboxing, Karate, Gun Collecting, Skydiving and poetry. This is the third book in the three-part Punisher series that he has been writing since tenth grade.

U.S. PRESENCE IN GULF REGION IS JUSTIFIED AND VERY NECESSARY

As tensions in the Persian Gulf slowly move toward war, public support is wavering. To avoid an unsupported conflict such as Vietnam, the time to act is

now.

The reason for this erosion of public support can be directly traced to the media. Most Americans depend on their televisions to provide them with all of the day's news. Due to the lack of an actual conflict, the only stories available deal with homesick soldiers in a harsh environment, small protests in several cities, a couple of soldiers (out of over 400,000) trying to dodge the commitment that they made to their country, or with Saddam Hussein's propaganda ploys to split the alliance against him.

Many say that they oppose U.S. involvement in the Gulf because President Bush has not outlined the reasons that we are there. In the November 26 issue of *Newsweek*, Bush clearly explains three reasons in a two-page letter that most Americans probably never read.

One of the many misconceptions that the media has presented is that, should the U.S. decide to take offensive action against Iraq, we would simply drive our tanks and troop carriers across the border. This is untrue. The first stage would be an air assault that would begin with the more than 1,000 U.S. and allied fighter aircraft engaging and destroying Iraq's 400-plane air force. Experts say that this could be accomplished in less than three days. With total air superiority, the hundreds of U.S. attack planes stationed in the Gulf region could proceed to destroy most of Iraq's military might.

Some experts believe that if this happens, many in Iraq's armed forces may surrender. If they do not, Hussein must then find a way to supply his troops in Kuwait in order to prepare them for any invasion. This will be extremely difficult because, unlike the jungles of Vietnam, there is no place to hide in the desert. Due to the extensive night-vision equipment possessed by U.S. soldiers and pilots, supply convoys would be easy to destroy during day or night. A

million-man army doesn't stand a chance against anybody if they have no food or ammunition.

Another reason people oppose Bush's actions is that people don't believe that we have a national interest there, and that oil is not worth dying for. Oil is a national interest. If Hussein had moved into Saudi Arabia, he would have controlled over one-fourth of the world's oil. Military action to force him out would have been difficult because we would have had no bases from which to launch an attack. Those who think that oil is not a national interest would think twice if they had to walk everywhere due to a gas shortage. In addition, tanks and planes cannot be used to defend our country if there is no gas for them to run on.

Many argue that other countries should be there to assist us in any military action. Right now the United States makes up 80% of the forces in Saudi Arabia. The reason for this is that we are the best fighting force in the world. We have the best weapons and our soldiers are trained well. No other nation would handle this situation alone. Vietnam taught us that total commitment was the only way to win a war, not by sending "advisors."

Some feel that we should just give the U.N. sanctions time to work. This would fail to avoid war and would instead probably increase the risk of high American casualties. Hussein is hard at work developing a nuclear weapon. A blockade will not stop him because he has already obtained many parts that can be used to construct such a device. Plus, the mountains in Iraq contain uranium that he is mining and will refine to weapons grade. Hussein has never possessed a weapon that he didn't use, even if it was on his own people. If he decided to unleash such a weapon on 400,000 U.S. soldiers, the carnage would be unimaginable, and obviously, war would be inevitable.

To enforce the embargo, military force will eventually be necessary. As

Iraq runs low on vital supplies, someone will attempt to run the blockade, causing action to be taken. If the U.S. spends months in the Gulf destroying probably unarmed merchant ships bearing food and medicine for Iraq, public opinion at home will turn against the operation. As it stands, the blockade does not include supplies flown in by air. This kind of laziness is one of the reasons we lost in Vietnam.

Also, by waiting a year for the sanctions to work, the United States provides Hussein with valuable time. Not only can he fortify his positions, but he can use propaganda to break apart the alliance against him. He has started broadcasting radio messages to U.S. troops, trying to break their morale, already low because of the adverse conditions and the extended stay a long distance from home.

Not only has Hussein taken a valuable strategic resource and broken almost all international laws, he has brutally destroyed a once-peaceful nation. As hostages are released, they tell tales of raping and pillaging by Iraqi soldiers. Stories have even been confirmed of babies being torn from their incubators and children being shot in front of their parents. ABC News has reported that one Iraqi detention center had killed over 200 resisters through torture. How long do we have to wait to stop this madman?

Public support for World War Two is legendary. Hitler had taken many countries by force and was killing people wholesale. But what had he done to the U.S. directly?

Hitler was also ignored after he took Sudetenland and promised that he would not invade any more countries. The result was a catastrophic war that killed millions.

As this article goes to print, Saddam has agreed to meet with the U.S. for

talks. One thing that the American public must understand is that we are not fighting yet, and the recent troop build-up that Bush is being criticized for has produced the first signs of weakness in the Iraqi dictator.

Iraq has talked recently of pulling out of Kuwait, with the exception of large oil fields in the north. Should this happen, what will be left behind? Nothing but a ruined land would remain in Saddam's wake. He told the world that he invaded Kuwait because it was rightfully his, but by offering to give all back except the oil fields, his true motive is revealed.

Many fear that action taken against Hussein will bring immediate Arab revenge. But if we show that we refuse to be intimidated by cowardly terrorist acts, such retribution will not occur, and the world will see that Americans do indeed support their men and women in uniform.

DICKENS' HARD TIMES

The Industrial Revolution led to great advancement in labor, science and technology in England during the early 1800's. Products were being produced en masse for the first time, and this was making them better and cheaper. This also decreased the need for skilled laborers, so while some became rich, most of the working class became poorer. To assuage their avaricious desires, industrialists exploited the young working class. Between 1800 and 1834, 82% of the workers in factories were between eleven and eighteen, while 62% of the working class overall suffered from tuberculosis. These deplorable times were the subject of Charles Dickens' classic, *Hard Times*. In it, Dickens advocates radical political, economic and environmental change.

Throughout the time period of which Dickens writes, the environment was on its own "hard times." These were the days before "Earth Day" and "recycling," when man did not care about or even comprehend the consequences of poisoning the fragile ecosystem in which he lived. The thick, black smoke that belched from the factories and mills of the day present an ominous nightmare for the reader of *Hard Times*. Dickens presents his distaste for the pollution that blemished his country through his description of Coketown. "It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage." Dickens also describes the "interminable serpents" of smoke that seem to trail on forever, along with the river in the town's canal that runs "purple with ill-smelling dye." This unpleasant vision of Coketown helps to convey Dickens' strong distaste of the deplorable state of the environment.

The economy of England portrayed in *Hard Times* relies almost completely on the hard-working, lower class. The nameless, faceless "hands" are the foundation of the rich, upper-class industrialists that exploit them. Dickens explains his belief that all of the rich in England look out for themselves through Bitzen, who says that the entire social system is a question of "self-interest." Dickens recognized the need for change in a society that forced children as young as fourteen to work as long as eighteen hours a day tied to heavy machinery for almost no wages, and he portrays this in *Hard Times*. The character that Dickens uses to convey his message is Stephen Blackpool, who is the epitome of the way the laws in England worked against the lower-class. When he tries to leave his wife for Rachael, he finds that it is illegal to do so unless he is divorced from his current, drunken wife. The problem is that without money, he will never obtain a divorce. It is through Blackpool that we also learn of the abuse of

the workers in Bounderby's factory. Stephen Blackpool allows Dickens to portray the working class not just as "hands," but as individuals. Through his words and actions, the oppressive economy of England is maligned.

Dickens also shows his distaste for the Utilitarian political views of the day. The Utilitarians, such as McChoakumchild, preach that school should be a place to learn only facts and that life should be void of such fancies as the circus. Dickens' belief that this is untrue is illustrated by Thomas Gradgrind Sr.'s realizations in the last book. Throughout the novel, Gradgrind had been a staunch believer in Utilitarianism, but when he learns of his son's crime, he sees how wrong he was. Gradgrind renounces his beliefs and aids Tom in escaping through the circus. The futile teachings concerning the merit of facts are exemplified through Bitzen, who attempts to stop Tom's escape. When Gradgrind asks him if he has no heart, Bitzen gives a standard, Utilitarian response: "The circulation, sir, couldn't be carried on without one. No man, sir, acquainted with the facts established by Harvey relating to the circulation of blood can doubt that I have a heart." Gradgrind leaves the circus a truly wiser man. Sleary speaks Dickens' point of view as he says, "People mutht be amuthed. They can't be alwayth a-learning, nor yet they can't be alwayth a-working, they an't made for it. You mutht have uth, Thquire. Do the withe thing and the kind thing too, and make the bethht of uth, and not the wurtht!"

Dickens' viewpoint is clear throughout *Hard Times*. Dickens not only shares his philosophies with the reader through narration, but he also uses his characters, as evident in the actions of Gradgrind Sr., Bitzen, Blackpool and Sleary. Dickens' philosophy was that the environment, the economy and the politics of his England were on "hard times," and it was time for a change.

Readers' Comments on Christopher Bosche's Portfolio

Readers were impressed by the author's ability to write creatively, personally, and persuasively across a variety of essays. "His satire on 'pulp' detective stories and movies is devastating and creative," one reader commented. The editorial on the Gulf War evoked numerous positive responses from readers, who described it as "professional," "mature," and "sophisticated." "It's controlled, informative; it's clear that the writer feels comfortable with his ability to engage in dialogue about an important topic," a reader wrote. Finally, readers were impressed by the author's cultural and historical approach to Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*. One wrote, "A multiple approach such as this prevents a narrow interpretation and invites discussion of many issues."

Portfolio by Sarah Petersen

**LaCrosse Central High School
LaCrosse, Wisconsin
Supervising Teacher: Nancy M. Ellingson**

Author's Introduction

My name is Sarah Petersen. I hail from LaCrosse, Wisconsin—a beautiful little city nestled between the Mississippi River and a series of bluffs. When I'm not reading or writing, I enjoy seeing movies, bicycling, spending an evening at my favorite dance club, and listening to all kinds of music.

In high school, I wrote for (and later edited) the school newspaper, directed a one-act play, golfed on the varsity team, tutored other students, and was an intern at a radio station for a semester. I have traveled through Great Britain and Ireland as well as many parts of America.

I'm enjoying my intellectual and social lives at Miami. I've already set a number of goals for myself: to justify owning a guitar, to maintain contact with my old friends, to learn to understand my Botany professor (thank you, plant!), to take frequent walks on the Western campus, and, above all, to remember to take a few risks.

REFLECTIVE LETTER

To the Miami University writing teachers:

Writing occupies an important place in my life, but it is secondary to reading. Any and all writing skills I possess can be attributed to the books, newspapers, and magazines I have perused over the last thirteen years. I truly believe that the key to writing well is the development of an instinct for what looks and sounds best: in my experience, exposure to good writing has been more

valuable than any writing class.

To assemble this portfolio, I examined nearly all of my recent work. I discovered, to my dismay, that very little of it fits within the guidelines. Most of the pieces I've written for pleasure are short stories, so I believed that piece #2 would be easy to find in my files. But I, like most young writers, consistently violate the first rule of creative writing (as expressed one of my writing teachers): write what you know. Ergo, I was forced to spend a great deal of time trying to find an appropriate "story or description."

The hunt for an analysis of a text was easier. I recently entered an essay competition that required an interpretation of *The Fountainhead*, Ayn Rand's classic novel. The essay question I chose to answer gave four quotations from the novel that were to be analyzed according to the narrative and the ideas expressed therein.

The explanatory essay was the most difficult to find. I came close to writing an entirely new piece to satisfy that requirement. I decided instead to revise a short piece that was written for a class. The original assignment was to write a short essay on an issue I felt strongly about. The choice of topic was not difficult: I'm a confessed bibliophile and, by extension, a lover of the English language. To rework the piece for my portfolio, I had to change the tone from editorial to explanatory. It was difficult for me to maintain the proper degree of objectivity; I was sorely tempted to include many more examples of the abuse our language has suffered.

In addition to writing creatively for pleasure, writing in my journal, and (of course) writing research papers and the like, I write for the school newspaper. As editor, it is my prerogative to write exclusively about the things that interest me. For the first issue of the year, I wrote an exhaustively researched article on

teen volunteerism in our community. I frequently review movies and albums because I enjoy using the peculiar language of the critic. Within the confines of the newspaper, I try to explore as many kinds of writing as I can; it is easy to ignore the value of variety.

This portfolio is a unique opportunity to display the diversity I have tried to incorporate into my life as a writer. I thank you for this chance to prove myself.

DON'T GET ON A BIKE IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE IT'S GOING

I do not remember what month it was, or how old I was, or why I went to Dana's house that day. My summer memories are like photographs stored loosely in a box, chronologically disordered (but precise) images.

I didn't know Dana very well. I had played with her a few times because our parents were friends, but when my mother dropped me off at the Campbells' house high atop the bluff, I felt forsaken by my family. There was some initial awkwardness when we were alone in Dana's frilly, pink bedroom, and she showed me her entire stuffed-animal collection. I listened to the rain drum gently on the roof and wished that I could go home.

By afternoon, however, we were playing like old pals. The rain stopped during our boisterous lunch, and we gave up trying to make Kool-Aid come out through our noses in favor of the muddy outdoors. When we got tired of throwing rain-swollen worms at each other, we wandered into the garage and emerged a few minutes later with Dana's bike, which was draped ornamentally with cobwebs.

The Campbells' house was flanked by a small yard with a few huge trees,

and the edge of the lawn dropped steeply away to meet the pebbly asphalt driveway that snaked up to the garage. The slope continued on the other side of the drive, bottoming out in a grove of slender trees. There was no suitable place to ride the bike, so we invented a game that involved skidding around the yard on the bike and bumping into trees to stop.

When it was my turn, I threw a leg over the stout, white two-wheeler and perched awkwardly on the banana seat. Pushing off, I steered unsteadily toward a tree. At the last moment, the front wheel turned sharply and the ground fell out from beneath me. I found myself bouncing rapidly down the slick, grassy slope. Panic thundered in my head, but I was frozen to the bike. The next thing I knew, I was lying on the edge of the driveway, listening to the dull thudding of my heart. Dimly, I was aware that Dana had scurried into the house. I remained sprawled on the driveway, and the bike's weight on top of me seemed comforting, like a quilt.

I heard the screen door bang shut, and Dana's mom flew from the house to where I lay. She lifted the bike gently and set it, undamaged, beside her. For the first time I was able to look at my injuries, and I burst into tears, shocked by the sight of my own blood. My scraped palms oozed blood, and my knee, which had probably taken the brunt of the trip across the asphalt, was raw and covered with bloody dirt.

Dana materialized, crying, at the edge of my field of vision. They helped me up, and I looked at what had halted my progress toward the grove of trees. I'd been lying on a small asphalt ridge at the edge of the driveway, a heartbeat away from a fifteen-foot drop. The spindly, whiplike, topmost branches were level with my eyes, and I shook with renewed terror as Dana and her mother led me toward the house.

Later, perched on a counter in the bathroom, I stared dully into the sink where my bloodied sock was being soaked while Mrs. Campbell swabbed my wounds with Bactine. At one point she told me that I was being a brave girl, and I nodded numbly through a dry hiccup. I was pleased when she covered my scrapes with gauze pads and tape, rather than a dozen (less glorious) Band-Aids. I spent the rest of the afternoon watching cartoons with Dana and basking in her sympathy. For the next week I described my "brush with death" for anyone who would listen, hoping to arouse the same delightful pity.

THE DETERIORATION OF AMERICAN ENGLISH

Deterioration, by definition, involves "becoming lower in character, value, or quality." It can be said, then, that the English language is undergoing a deterioration so swift and complete as to be irreversible. Some linguistic experts argue that English is evolving, not degenerating. But evolution denotes growth and development, and not even the most optimistic could apply that term to the common errors that scar the American vernacular.

One alarming trend in American speech is a shrinking vocabulary. There are over a million English words, yet the average person uses only three thousand during his lifetime, limiting himself and his listeners. Some beautiful words have fallen into disuse; many people seem to settle for familiar (though imprecise) words that add little meaning. Most can read and recognize many more words than they use, but avoid new expressions for fear of misuse, mispronunciation, or peer criticism. Slang seems to have become a language unto itself—the hallmark of pop culture.

Another symptom of the disintegration of American English is the abundance of spelling and grammatical errors in advertising. Some are deliberate attempts to be "colorful," while others stem from ignorance. Young readers are invariably bewildered by intentional misspellings such as "Kwik" Trip or "Kountry Korner." Carelessness leads many small businesses to commit crimes against grammar, such as the blatant misuse of apostrophes. For example, there exists a sign above a restaurant on a busy corner that promises "BURGER'S GALORE!"

Many people, even the "educated," seem to have a problem with basic grammar. Perhaps this stems from the fact that some teachers are unable to speak and write correctly. A seventh-grade English teacher once inquired of a student, "Were you and her going to do that report?" An eleventh-grade Health class took a test that had been written by the teacher; several simple words were misspelled, and the sentence structure was both atrocious and confusing.

English is the native language of 300 million people. A total of one-fifth of the world's population (over a billion people) can speak some English. Almost 80% of all newspapers and radio broadcasts are in English. Yet the general quality of the spoken language seems to be deteriorating. Futurists predict that, by the year 2000, 1.5 billion people will be able to speak some English. If this is a reasonable possibility, shouldn't we, as Americans, correct our wretched linguistic habits before they erode the foundations of the language itself?

AYN RAND'S CONDEMNATION OF COMPROMISE

The Fountainhead incorporates many ideas and philosophies, and each can be summed up in a pithy quotation. Four quotes stand out, encapsulating not only the essence of one idea but of the grand theme of *The Fountainhead*.

a. KEATING: "How do you always manage to decide?"

ROARK: "How can you let others decide for you?"

This quote shows the crux of the conflict between Peter Keating and Howard Roark. Possessing neither exceptional talent nor a superior intellect, Keating uses his instinctive charm and fleeting good looks to curry favor among his associates. Roark, on the other hand, seeks no such favor; he is content in the knowledge that his actions are justified according to his personal code of conduct. Howard Roark's laws are few and simple, but they are also absolute: do not compromise, do not humble yourself before any man, and do not betray your capacity for greatness. Roark's laws apply to everything; built into his code is an automatic response to every decision ever required of him. Peter Keating, blessed with (or cursed with) no such code, relies on others to feed him a set of guidelines. When forced to alter or compromise these guidelines, Keating feels no compunction—they were never really his. In short, Roark makes decisions quickly and consistently because, in most cases, his principles indicate a certain course of action. Keating, whose principles are borrowed from people he thinks he should respect, chooses the option that is favored by the greatest number of people. Roark cannot understand Keating's submission, while Keating cannot comprehend Roark's strength.

b. TOOHEY: "If your first concern is still for what you are or think or feel or have or haven't got—you're still a common egotist."

KATIE: "You mean, I must *want* to be unhappy?"

TOOHEY: "No. You must stop wanting *anything*."

Catherine Halsey moves into Ellsworth Toohey's life when she is seventeen. Meeting her famous uncle for the first time, she is still fresh, uncorrupted, materialistic, soft, and happy. She dreams of going to college, getting married, and raising a family. Toohey advises her against attending college, and eventually the malleable Katie obtains a position at a settlement house. Her uncle fully approves of the job—selfless work that involves destitute people. Catherine, however, begins to feel some very human rumblings of discontent. Toohey and his niece exchange these words when Katie approaches her uncle to confess to him that she is dissatisfied. She tells her uncle that she feels horribly unclean and selfish because she has come to demand gratitude of the people she helps. Katie, limited by her artless honesty, does not realize that this demand is her uncle's prime motivation. Katie is uncomfortable with conditional generosity. She thinks that she should want to help people without wishing to control them in any way. Yet Toohey has made a career of provisory benevolence. In persuading the public that the only way to attain self-realization is to surrender all sense of self, Toohey makes his followers dependent on his wisdom for direction. Thus, he has power over many, and exploits that power when necessary. In the incident quoted above, Toohey is exerting his influence over his niece. He is telling her that, in order to find any real satisfaction and peace, she must empty herself: abolish all desires, including her desire to be content. Toohey knows, of course, that she will grow more dependent on him if she attempts this; empty people need to be filled. Toohey's ultimate goal is to gain what he tells others to surrender: power. Ellsworth Toohey is a vandal. He sabotages a weak, halting emotion that many call self-respect.

c. DOMINIQUE: "Roark, I can accept anything, except what seems to be the easiest for most people: the half-way, the almost, the just-about, the in-between."

This quote stands alone, with no background knowledge necessary. It sums up Dominique Francon's uncompromising nature. Dominique embraces every extreme and flinches only at mediocrity. She does nothing incompletely, be it painful or pleasurable. Dominique questions the worth of a soul that contents itself with slipshod work, with a bad cup of coffee, with middling happiness. She wonders why people settle for less than their due; why they are unwilling to pursue the superior things that life has to offer. For Dominique, an average life with petty concerns and small joys is not merely repugnant—it is impossible. Emotionally, she is incapable of moderation. Love, hate, and indifference are her three responses. Indifference is her method of protecting herself from a world awash with almos

d. ROARK: "Independence is the only gauge of human virtue and value. What a man is and makes of himself—not what he has or hasn't done for others."

This statement is made during Roark's closing arguments at a trial. It is not the first time, nor will it be the last, that Roark is forced to defend his personal code. Society and the American definition of justice compel him to define his unconventional soul in conventional terms, to explain to a room full of second-handers the concept of total freedom. Roark's freedom is not emancipation from the law, but rather an independence of the crippling chains of doubt, fear, and pity that bind souls and turn men bitter. Roark challenges people to shift the accepted measure of a person's value from the degree to which that person has humbled himself to the degree to which the person realizes his human potential. He urges his listeners to free their self-esteem from the clutches of popular judgment, taking responsibility for their own worth and happiness. Roark attempts to share

his vision with every person in the courtroom and with every person that gazes upon one of his buildings. He tells them that man is an end unto himself. He tries to make them understand that exalting the glory of the human form and the potential of the human soul is neither wicked nor narrow. Unfortunately, society and religion have had centuries to convince mankind that the opposite is true. Perhaps Roark's ideals will find a place in the America of the future. Maybe the subjugation of the human spirit will eventually come to an end. The creators and innovators of the ages are owed no less.

Readers' Comments on Sarah Peterson's Portfolio

Readers praised the writer's mature technical ability to control tone and mood, and the precision and her details. One reader said she could recall, without even referring back to the narrative, some of its wonderful details: rain-swollen worms, the drape of cobwebs, the spindly, whip-like tops of trees. Readers admired the "expertise" demonstrated by the explanatory essay, and praised her confidence in approaching such an "intriguing topic." They also praised the author's willingness to take a risk in submitting her responses to test questions about *The Fountainhead* instead of a more traditional analysis. They felt she put together a "remarkably clear, coherent, developed essay," one which "demonstrates a solid understanding and personal distillation of a difficult book."

Portfolio by Shiri Frank

Hamilton High School
Hamilton, Ohio
Supervising Teacher: Steve Turner

Introduction by Uzi Frank

My younger sister, Shiri Frank, died in a car accident this summer. So instead of Shiri telling you about herself and her writings, I will hopelessly attempt to introduce you to the person and writer she is. Let it be known: this task of introducing Shiri is futile and impossible to obtain even a glimpse of her beauty and power. You had to meet and talk to her; the following writings of her portfolio represent only the slightest shadow of her essence.

For Shiri, writing was a means for expressing the many thoughts and feelings which raced through her mind, heart, and soul. For years, she kept journals which served as a record of the events of her life. She was always writing poems and stories. She was always pushing herself, always testing her abilities and limits, always exploring new words and new ways of writing—she experimented. Quite often, what she wrote came out as awkward and ungainly. But this is what helped her develop into a better writer; she made mistakes and learned from them.

I always underestimated Shiri. I always thought of myself as the better writer. When Shiri was putting her portfolio together, she was afraid of being rejected as a writer. In typical older brother fashion, I tried to boost her confidence, yet silently feared that her work would not stand the test. I had nothing to fear. A few days before Shiri died, she was notified that she received the maximum amount of six credits. For her, this served as a validation and vindication of her writing; she was very happy and very proud.

Now I must end this introduction for there is nothing more to say, yet so much more to say. I am overcome, as the rest of my family and Shiri's friends are, with an immense feeling of sadness and loss. Loss at the unfulfilled dreams Shiri had of becoming a teacher and writer. Loss at the kindness, happiness, energy, humor, joy, and hope she brought into our worlds. It's a loss which will never be possible for you to understand. None of my empty words can capture the greatness and beauty of my sister—so why try? I try because Shiri is so beautiful and she has so much to give and to teach that the only thing left is to try. No matter how futile and desperate and worthless the attempt, it is all we have left. Well enough. Let Shiri stand on her own. She always could and she always will.

Frank

REFLECTIVE LETTER

Dear Miami University Writing Teachers,

In this world, where a baby's first breath could be hazardous to its health, and its first bite of protein could be at the expense of a screaming animal, I very easily could become so disheartened as to alienate myself from the overwhelming agenda of solving problems. However, I have discovered a way of maintaining my sanity, while at the same time, explaining and communicating the official problems of the world to the world—through writing. After all, there is something delightfully soothing about expressing feelings and perspectives in the written word, all the while knowing that people might become enlightened by the thoughts I can write down on paper.

The first entry to this portfolio was inspired by a true event in my life. It was designed to communicate an unusual experience I had by myself in the confines of nature. The second piece summarizes the thoughts which have preoccupied my mind, as of late. The injustice which animals must endure for our sakes is brutal, and sometimes even unnoticed. The last contribution to my assessment—an analysis of "The Hollow Man"—serves as a necessary and a universal message. I do not think I have ever read anything as fascinating and truthful as Eliot's vision of the world, and it felt imperative to examine it at a more elaborate level than by just reading it. I hope you enjoy what I have to say...

IN CONTACT WITH NATURE

When I awoke, the cabin was empty of children, and I lay on the bed listening to the silence. For a while I felt grand snuggled under the cover as the

breeze from the screen door touched my face and feet. Then an overwhelming feeling of having created a futile summer of my time urged me to get out of bed. This I did, and with such haste that I became dizzy and had to sit down for a recuperating instant. Regaining balance, I pulled on my suit, gathered my belongings, and set out of the creaking screen door, down the painted wood steps, and toward the dirt road.

This I followed for a short time, and turned at a path of high grass behind a broken-down barn. With my arms up, I coasted sideways through the path, doing goofy imitations of a Jane Fonda workout. A gravel road ran perpendicular to the grass path, and having crossed it, I welcomed the acre of grass by skipping across it.

There was an elderly man riding across the green surface on a tractor; I waved to him, as he seemed pretty nice. He seemed reluctant to wave back, but did so anyway, looking perplexed at my behavior. What could I say; I was happy.

I rather clumsily took my walkman out of the bag which hung off my shoulder, inserted a tape, and listened. I found the entrance to the woods with a little difficulty, it having grown together from lack of use. Once inside the woods, I felt the cooler temperature; the light from the sun had been filtered by the canopy of new and old trees standing together. A tree lay on its back; its roots were pulled from the forest floor from a reason I was not entirely sure. I bent down to get a closer look. I petted the lump with my hand, but stood up feeling ridiculous.

The noise from my walkman suddenly seemed too loud, so that was removed quickly and replaced in my shoulder bag. I walked further along the damp bed below my feet, thinking that the woods seemed very relaxed that day. The farther and farther I walked, the louder and louder the waterfall became to

my ears....

Eventually, I reached the steep hill leading to the waterfall rocks. Grasping the scattered trees for balance, I managed to reach the first slimy rock which was positioned closest to the waterfall. Having descended the jagged rocks, I landed my possessions on a lone, dry rock and stripped myself of the clothes I wore. Feeling prepared, I entered the pool of water directly below the fall of water. A current kept urging me farther from the fall, but I restrained by holding on to a protruding growth of a rock.

Feeling brave, I surrendered the security of the rock, and began to splash about in the water. It was an exhilarating feeling; I started to believe I was alone in the universe.

Suddenly I was mad, roaring like an uncultivated caveman, beating my chest and saying, "Unga-bunga." All the while, I was thinking about what actually would happen to someone who was born into the world alone. What would he be like—uninfluenced by others, completely on his own? I became this creature in an instant. Danger was unknown to me; I swam toward the rushing falls to find out what was hidden behind them. In pursuit, I swam viciously at them, but only gravitated away from the falls. I did not give up. I kept swimming, diving, running into the falls, but all in vain. Having expended all energy, I sat breathing heavily on the rock, simply looking at the clear water turn to white foam as it crashed with the pressure of the fall. Instinctively, I crawled across the shore's rocks and peered behind the arch of the falls. A side stream covered any sign of space behind the falls, but I slide through the stream, and found myself sitting in the hollow niche behind the fall of water. I stuck my hand through the water, and the power of the fall pushed it downward. I pushed back, and let my hand absorb the spray. Then I cleaned my nails, and stuck my feet out

and wiggled them. It was a glorious moment. Nobody knew I was there. I could hide there. Only my clothes, my bag, and my shoes could be found; no one would ever know I was there.

Just as Tarzan did, I threw my voice into the air. The sound of the rushing falls drowned it out though.

"I'm in here! Help!" I cried in a mocking tone.

"Ha, ha, ha!" I yelled at the people who were probably wondering where the voice came from.

"This is your god speaking!" I screamed, grinning at my humor.

I decided to practice shooting out from the enclosure of the waterfalls in case somebody were to come. I considered it to be a pretty comical plan which could very easily amount to something hilarious.

And so I did. Turning around in circles, having landed, I felt as though I had accomplished a great feat. I applauded myself with several self-initiated dunks into the underwaters. Looking up into the sky, I sang, "La, la, la! I love this world! La, la lee!"

It was then that I heard some voices coming from inside of the woods. I quickly headed to my towel, wrapped it around my body, slipped into my shoes, and awkwardly climbed the hill. I held my clothes tightly against my chest, and with my bag swung around my dripping, bare shoulder, I managed to leave without them seeing me. It was with the aid of the friendly trees that I climbed the hill with little problem, and that I found a very different direction back to camp.

WOE UNTO THEM

Lately I have become increasingly and sadly aware of the relentless, unheeding destruction the human race loads upon the creatures of our dear Mother Earth. We seem to comfort our consciences and to excuse our barbarism with all that our science classes taught us. "The control of nature," "The survival of the fittest," and even "the food chain" make us believe we are cultivating a very natural process. However, we have become very unnatural with our supply and demand, and the teachings from the science classes are no longer applicable to the situation at hand. I fear that nature no longer exists on its own, as a separate entity; rather, we have made it so that nature exists as either an interference or a convenience for man.

When a person can drive down a busy, forty-mile-per-hour road, which leads to the second-largest mall in Ohio, and see a deer crossing sign, it is time to reevaluate our priorities. This has happened, my friends. The sign most likely was erected to warn the drivers of potential obstacles; I wonder who warned the deer. I am beginning to think that they simply know not to prance their lovely bodies across this bustling road, having not seen or heard of a deer yet. I guess it is only a matter of time until it is assumed that the deer have gone, and that it is all right to remove the sign.

I only recently discovered that my neighbor's backyard swampland was turned into a car dealership and apartment complexes. We were new to the area when we moved into one of the apartments to which he was referring, so we did not know of its original terrain. This was revealed to me after a rainy morning when a snapping turtle was found laying rather lifelessly upon the road. We transported the lost creature to a nearby lake, but the reality of that and the other

creatures' lives became known to me. Here again it was only a matter of time until the turtles and the frogs would realize that their home had been stolen for good.

If this is not enough, our consumption of these animals is. We have reached a point where the only reason the cows and the pigs and the chickens live is to serve us at the time of their deaths. Perhaps this always has been the case, but never has it been so deliberate and unfeeling. These breathing animals live suffocating lives, only to be butchered and sold to selfish mouths. I even can guarantee that with the amount of beef and pork and chicken we throw away, whole animals—millions of them—just as easily could have been disposed of at the time of the kill. That is how sad and arrogant our appetites have become.

I believe that it is time we felt guilty for our abusive ways. Cows are being fed hormone pills to increase their rate of fertility. Even then, they are not permitted to nurse their young. We starve them, chain them, and cage them; all in order to supply the right tenderness, or the appropriate flavor for our taste buds. There are plenty of other foods to eat other than dead animals. There are other places to shop, to drive, and even to live. Why must we continue to make the animals live for us? Maybe it is time to let them be already.

GRIEVING FOR THE BUSYBODIES

T.S. Eliot's poem "The Hollow Man" depicts the spiritually empty nature of the industrialized world in the 1920's. Perhaps unexpectedly, however, this masterpiece of Eliot's has continued to shed a universal light on the effects technology has had in regard to the nature of people. With a bitter, yet desperate

tone, Eliot relates that while money and material have become irrevocably valuable, mankind has become spiritually bankrupt. These ideas are expressed in a very sad and helpless voice throughout his piece.

The beauty of "The Hollow Man" is Eliot's ability to compress a heavy message within a few lines. For instance, the two lines,

Mistah Kurtz—he dead.
A penny for the Old Guy.

are pregnant with symbolic meaning. In order to understand Eliot's clever allusion, it demands that the reader be familiar with Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* and with the tale of Guy Fawkes. In *The Heart of Darkness* Conrad created a well-dignified character by the name of Kurtz. Kurtz was sent to Africa in an attempt to civilize the uncivilized society. Unexpectedly, however, the opposite occurred: Kurtz became a cannibal. After not hearing from Kurtz, Marlow was sent in to investigate the reason and, indeed, discovered Kurtz in his lacking state. By way of a boat they journeyed home, but with the shock of discovering what he had become, Kurtz died a horrid, screaming death. By simply inserting the words "Mistah Kurtz—he dead," Eliot managed to incorporate the idea—first used by Conrad—that the civilized and dignified has died.

By alluding to Guy Fawkes in the following line of "A penny for the Old Guy," Eliot is saying that the dedicated and passionate men also have died. Guy Fawkes saw corruption in the English Parliament, and in an attempt to stop what he thought wrong, he devised a plan to bomb the Parliament. Though he was captured and killed, he represents the devotion which Eliot suggests has left the world. Now when England celebrates Guy Fawkes Day, little boys dress up as

scarecrows, and in a collection for firecrackers, demand "a penny for the old Guy." This information illustrates that Guy Fawkes is no longer a hero of devotion, but a means of acquiring money.

The poem continues in this manner, with Eliot clicking his tongue at the continual state of religious demoralization. His first verse examines the men which the world is breeding. He writes that they are "hollow" and "stuffed." These two words are opposite in meaning; yet they apply to two different concerns of man. "Hollow" refers to the maintenance of religion in man's life, while "stuffed" refers to the importance of materialism in man's life. The phrase "leaning together" infers that man cannot even stand on his own anymore. Instead, we conform and let our personalities be determined by others. "Headpiece filled with straw" is a more deliberate expression, which Eliot uses to express that man is intellectually sterile.

By using two instances of imagery, Eliot effectively communicates how "hollow" and "meaningless" our conversations have become. Just as "wind [is] in dry grass" and how "rats' feet [are] over broken glass," our conversations have become flat sounds with no real purpose or direction intended or achieved. The couplet which follows serves as a brilliant and strong message. By juxtaposing two words which distinctly contradict each other, Eliot achieves his intent of creating a sense of nothingness. This is done to show that our efforts accomplish nothing substantial anymore. Indeed, we are shapes, but we have no form. Though we try to practice force, we are paralyzed and restrained by lack of ambition. In essence, we go through the motions, yet we fail to advance in a healthy direction.

In the third stanza, Eliot addresses those who ventured to hell at death. He explains that the present-day man has become so very unfeeling that we no longer

can be associated with the bad. In fact, the present-day man has lost all will and passion, and we cannot even be violent anymore. If those in hell were to remember us, Eliot writes, they should remember us as emotionally neutral, as spiritually "hollow" and materialistically "stuffed" men.

Eliot proceeds to write, not only of man, but of the land on which man lives. He ironically describes it as "dead" and "cactus"-like, despite the hustle and bustle of the industrialized behavior. The four lines,

Here the stone images
Are raised, here they receive
The supplication of a dead man's hand
Under the twinkle of a fading star...

summarizes his belief on the deterioration of religion. Indeed, the churches and preachers exist, but that is all. The hearts have settled, and actions regulated by a person's conscience have gone. Now the supplications are given by the Jimmy Swaggarts, and religion, once a star, simply "is fading." Eliot then is shown wondering, almost desperately, whether it is like this in "Death's other kingdom." He wants to know if, in Heaven, people are alone because they can no longer express love and admiration. He asks whether there are "lips that would kiss" if only their "cool" images would permit them. Finally he finishes with a question as to whether they also "form prayers to broken stone" in Heaven. Just as "fading" and "stone" suggest, the word "broken" is just another way of saying how decrepit and lost the feeling of religion is in the world.

The only glimmer of hope offered in Eliot's lamentation appears in the line "...unless we let the eyes reappear." Though this hope, as Eliot describes it, is only "the hope of empty men," his mentioning the "perpetual star" and the "multifoliate rose" make this hope valid and invited. Eliot is communicating that

Heaven is the only place which has not become "sightless". In this welter of moral and personal confusion, we could practice the goodness which we believe is in Heaven in our immediate lives, thereby getting "the eyes [to] reappear."

The very last section of Eliot's "The Hollow Men" is perhaps the most climactic and rich contribution to this poem. It begins with the perversion of the nursery rhyme, "Here we go 'round the Mulberry Bush." He replaces the mulberry bush, which grows edible and sweet berries, with the prickly pear, which is a cactus and only sometimes is edible. More concretely stated, we are no longer advancing as much as we once had. The products which once were sweet and fruitful have become sour and fruitless. The last line to his version reads, "At five o'clock in the morning." This being the normal time for industry workers to begin work in the 1920's, Eliot makes his point of the world working so hard to get nowhere valuable. Around and around the prickly pear we go, every day, at the same time, but the next day always will bring the same day as yesterday. We are cultivating a perpetual, unadvancing agenda for our lives.

Following this rhyme are three stanzas which basically relate a similar message. With every two lines, Eliot maintains an argument between what was and what has become. An example of this exists in the lines, "Between the idea and the reality." Of course ideas will exist as long as the pulse of a man exists, but taking action and making reality of these ideas is what is demanding. He writes that the difference between these lines is "The Shadow." "The Shadow," which represents death, is determined by how much humans try and reach their potential. Ideas, notions, conceptions, and emotions are always going to exist as long as people exist; however, the determining factor is whether people make realities of their ideas, acts of their motions, and creations of their conceptions. Eliot communicates that in proportion to our potential, only breathing or doing the

barest minimum makes us seem dead.

In between each of these paragraphs, a voice is shown trying to pray. However, this voice cannot finish the full prayer at one time. The thought of what is and what could be continues to break up the voice's thoughts of prayer. Eventually, the voice cannot even finish one full line. The voice, which represents present-day Man, is incapable of praying. Eliot then finishes the poem by saying that with the absence of prayer, there will be an absence of the quality of life. He writes, "This is the way the world ends." His final line, "Not with a bang but a whimper," shows that we have lost the dynamic personalities. Just as a dog whimpers when he gets injured, we will only be able to sound a whimper when we die. We have become an injured and harmed race, injuring and harming our living quarters. There are no civilized Kurtzes or dedicated Fawkeses left in the world. Everyone is low-profile, conforming and watching instead of acting. When we destroy ourselves, we will be so weak that no bang could attend our departing.

The poem, "The Hollow Man" has and will continue to apply to modern problems in the world, just as industry has and will continue to take its toll. Apathy and self-itis will continue to be shown if morals and values continue to be replaced by materialism and financial gain. Eliot's plea for understanding and awareness should not be taken lightly or be brushed aside. His message could help the attitudes of countless people who destroy the earth by not also helping to save it, or who gain material possessions by stealing from any operating system. The world is suffering; Eliot has foreseen its deterioration. Now we must "let the eyes reappear."

Readers' Comments on Shiri Frank's Portfolio

Readers were immediately struck by the writer's intense sense of commitment and passion, her "unabashed awareness of herself and her world." One reader described her narrative as "vital, alive, bristling with energy," and praised its mature sense of closure. Readers commented, too, on her successful rhetorical strategies in the explanatory essay. They were most impressed with her analysis of "The Hollow Men." One reader states: "This is a level of close reading which is hard to surpass, and she deals with contradictions assuredly and well." Another saw this essay as a logical conclusion to a passionate portfolio which deals with "the tensions between delicate balance in nature and the corrosive demands of a materialistic culture."

Portfolio by Christine Colburn

**Walter Johnson High School
Bethesda, Maryland**

Supervising Teacher: Patricia Gafford

Author's Introduction

My name is Christine Colburn (isn't that an original beginning?). My friends call me Christy, and certain people whom I care about choose to call me Chris. I prefer Christy in most cases. I thought that maybe when I came to college I would embrace sophistication and become "Christine," but for the first few days I forgot to answer when the name was called, so I abandoned that idea. There's no reason to pretend to be someone who you are not.

I'm very comfortable with who I am: currently a freshman at Miami, I graduated from a large high school in a suburb of D.C. I was a cheerleader for four years, and a competitive swimmer for 13. I also love to sing—here at Miami, I sing for an a cappella group called the Choraliers. I am an avid member of the College Republicans, and I just won the student senate election for my dorm! I could also tell you that I love opera and parties and taking pictures of sunsets and laughing out loud, but that still wouldn't tell you much about me.

What I'm trying to say is, I don't believe that just presenting facts about my life is an adequate way to convey who I am. The only way to fully understand my personality is to meet me, talk with me and exchange opinions. For now, the best you can do is read what I've written, because it is more a part of me than the external components which make up my life. My writing is my passion, and if you can feel that when you read it, you've come much closer to understanding who I am.

Hi Mom and Dad, hi Becca, hi Dan...this is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather and to my dad, whose continual, unwavering confidence in my ability to write has given me the courage to succeed.

REFLECTIVE LETTER

Dear Miami University writing teachers,

I first became interested in animal research when, in my sophomore Oral Communications class, I was given the assignment of writing and presenting a persuasive speech. The girl who sat across the aisle from me had chosen to represent the case against animal research; so, with a lack of any better idea, I decided to represent the other side—the case for animal research. I really had no concept of what the subject was all about, so when I started to research my project, I was amazed by the facts. I discovered that there really is no case against it, and the people who try to stop it—biomedical research, that is—can actually hurt people's lives! This revelation angered me so much, I spent an enormous amount of time on my speech trying best to convey my strong feelings on the subject. I received an A for my grade, and a year later, when I saw a newspaper announcement for a "medical ethics" essay contest, I simply wrote out the speech in composition form and entered it. I ended up winning first place and a \$1,000 scholarship.

What started out as a required school project ended up winning a major award, and I believe one reason for my success is that I wrote the paper with intense emotion, and that emotion created excellence. This essay, included in my portfolio, is just one example of the power of writing that I have experienced.

Ever since I turned fourteen, I've kept a diary. I don't write in it every day, but whenever a significant emotional event occurs in my life, I record every detail. It provides an outlet for me, a release to help me deal with whatever has transpired. I don't always know exactly why I'm writing, but doing so always makes me feel better. Later, when I am removed from the situation, I look back

on what I've written and am amazed at the emotion I see pouring forth from the pages. The words hit me with surprising force, and suddenly I remember quite clearly the exact feeling of anger, euphoria, or extreme disappointment.

It is difficult to capture the same effect when writing an expository paper for English class when I don't feel passion for the subject. This had been my dilemma for quite a few years—I thought that the only kind of writing I excelled in was creative writing (obviously I cared about what I wrote, or I wouldn't be creating it). But I never thought that I could write with such passion until I wrote my speech on animal research. Since then, I've discovered that enthusiasm can be an ingredient in types of writing other than creative [writing]. Another essay included in my portfolio, a description of a personal experience, was written to fulfill a rather mundane English assignment, yet because of my eagerness to discuss my experience with everyone and anyone who would listen, I was able to make the paper come alive. The final essay enclosed is an interpretation of a poem, which was the result of another writing assignment designed to coerce students into understanding Victorian poetry. However, upon reading the poem, my spirit was affected, thus I was able to develop a non-literal interpretation that brought out some of my inner thoughts and emotions.

I would be lying if I said that I ardently enjoy expository as much as creative writing. I realize, however, that writing can achieve excellence if the author is truly interested in his/her subject, and when passion is felt, it can become superior. I hope that this portfolio is a testament to that realization and that you might be able to experience the emotions with which I created it.

TAKE IT TO THE LIMIT

Picture this: a blazing sun casting 103-degree rays of fire onto your sunburned back; sticky sweat pouring down your face, mixing with the dirt painted on the canvas of your skin. Imagine a neck that hurts so much you think your head must weigh a hundred pounds; knees so cramped they have turned numb; and a rear end so swollen and sore, when you sit down you think someone must have put tennis balls in your underwear.

Not a pleasant picture, is it? But then imagine this: reaching the crest of a hill, the wind screaming in your ears as you conquer the top and sail downwards on wings like an eagle; the feeling of joy and accomplishment that follows; and the happiness that results from sharing this experience with 39 other people you have come to know almost as well as yourself. Sound better?

I experienced both these extremes when I took a bike trip the summer before my junior year of high school. My church youth group sponsored this trip, the ultimate goal of which was to bike from Washington, D.C. to the Outer Banks, North Carolina—a distance of approximately 400 miles—in nine days. A moderately active teenager among 39 seemingly world-class athletes, I suffered an unfortunate momentary lapse of sanity when I decided to take this trip. Everyone agreed I was crazy when I announced that I was going to ride a bicycle approximately 70 miles a day for six total days without any previous training. I mean **literally** no training—the longest period of time I had spent on a bicycle in my life was perhaps the five minutes it takes to reach the neighborhood pool from my house. However, I, with my eternal optimism and self-confidence, believed I could do it. And I eventually did. But it wasn't easy.

I started out well enough, very excited and full of enthusiasm. Yet twenty

minutes and six hills later, the full impact of my insanity hit me. I am a good cheerleader and a strong swimmer, but apparently my knees didn't know that. They protested so much that I couldn't use them and fell off the bike. Tired, hot, and sweaty, all I could think was that I wanted to go home. Instead, I got back on my bike and kept going (not, however, because I possessed incredible courage or bravery—the staff counselor behind me told me in no uncertain terms to “move it or lose it!”).

One would think that I could have derived a certain sense of comfort from sympathizing with my fellow bikers. After all, not ~~everyone~~ was a world-class athlete. I did, but not immediately; I went on this trip without a single person I could call a close friend. It was quite a change for me, because I have many friends and am usually surrounded by them. These same friends, however, were not stricken with the same mental disorder I was and decided not to go on the trip. Also, 33 out of 40 people on this trip were of the male persuasion, which makes for good odds socially, but it's harder to sympathize with guys. They were all stronger, suffered less physical turmoil than I did, and didn't care about how they looked. They found it hard to relate when I complained that my hair looked terrible, and I couldn't wear any makeup, and the closest thing I had to a shower all week was the nightly hosedown in a church parking lot (yes, we slept each night in churches, all of which had hard, **hard** wooden floors).

These conditions, and the fact that after biking seventy miles one is tired, smelly, grouchy, and generally not in the best mood for making friends, actually brought the group together, instead of at each other's throats. Ideally, a church group like ours should have been all smiles and sunshine and generosity; in reality, we were not so perfect. Often we were selfish and rude, but always completely honest. Living day and night with each other in our situation served to

bind us together, and create strong friendships—the kind where everyone is sincere—and emotions are very much on the surface.

I touched base with my true self during those nine days. I realized that I can be very impatient (such as when the staff kept telling us the next rest stop was “just around the corner,” and dinner was in “a few minutes”) and also sometimes rude (“If you don’t let me pass, I **will** run you down!”). These traits I had somewhat suspected. However, I also discovered that I have a real compassion for others and a great talent for making friends (I met two of my current best friends on that trip). One particular insight I gained was the importance of praise and the encouragement it can bring; I mastered the art of giving it to others.

Physically, this trip was very beneficial because it helped me to build endurance. It also gave me a chance to test my limits and then break them, and presented the kind of challenge everyone should have a chance to meet. Spending almost every minute of nine days and nights with the same people not only taught me empathy for them, but also gave me time to reflect on my own character and discover qualities I hadn’t known I possessed. Each day, as I built up my stamina and confidence, I also built up friendships and personal strength.

On the last day, when we finally reached the beach, the truth hit us. We had biked 400 miles in six riding days! We felt such an exhilarating surge of accomplishment, the whole group immediately jumped into the hotel pool, dirty clothes and all (the management was not pleased). I was so excited over my achievement, I believed I could bike to the moon! Everyone who went on the trip expressed the same feelings as I—those of growth and accomplishment—and the excitement over new friendships. This trip turned out to be one of the most fulfilling experiences of my entire life. So maybe I wasn’t so crazy, after all.

THE USE OF ANIMALS IN MEDICAL RESEARCH MUST CONTINUE

In March of 1982, five-week-old Kendra Hawthorne was diagnosed as having a rare liver disease. Doctors believed that her chances for survival were slim without a liver transplant. For two years, Kendra and her parents waited and hoped. Finally, when an organ donor became available, they flew to Pittsburgh for the operation that saved Kendra's life—an operation whose surgical techniques were researched on animals (1).

In 1985, Keith Fernandez was born with a lung disorder that failed to respond to conventional high-pressure ventilation therapy. Two hours after his birth, his parents were told that their baby's lungs were collapsing, and he was going to die. However, he was put on EMCO (Extra-Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation), which allowed him to breathe. The complex procedure that saved little Keith's life was developed and tested with the help of animal experimentation (1).

Lila Koch of Tampa, Florida, was born with reversed ventricles and two major obstructions in her heart. At the age of four weeks, she became the youngest person ever to receive a pacemaker, a life-saving device developed through animal research. She is eight now, and at a press conference last year, she told reporters, "I would give up my cat if she could help a 3-year-old with cystic fibrosis" (2).

Does mankind have the right to experiment on animals in order to further advance scientific and medical knowledge? Is human life so valuable that the preservation of it justifies the use of animals in research? Is it right to favor a child's life over a rat's? These are questions that fuel the current medical debate over whether or not the use of animals in scientific and medical research can be

morally and ethically justified. The answers, however, are very complex and fraught with emotion on every side.

In order to analyze this issue carefully, the three primary aspects of the problem must be discussed: Has animal research really been beneficial, and is it necessary to continue to advance human health; are animals exploited and subjected to unnecessary pain in the name of research; and are there any alternatives to animal experimentation? If we can answer these questions truthfully, perhaps we can justify the use of animals in research in order to preserve human life.

Has animal research benefited mankind, and is it essential to continue to advance human health? "Virtually every medical innovation of the last century has been based to a significant extent upon the results of animal experimentation," states Dr. William Raub, acting director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), who oversees 20,000 NIH biomedical research grants annually (3). It is a fact that the development of such life-saving medical advancements as open-heart surgery, the cardiac pacemaker, and organ transplantation is credited to animal research.

Furthermore, polio, which once killed some 30,000 people annually and crippled thousands of children, has been almost totally eradicated in the United States by vaccines perfected on monkeys. Animal research has vanquished small pox and enabled us to vaccinate our children against mumps, measles, rubella, and diphtheria. And not just humans, but animals, too, have benefited from this research. Cataract removal techniques, animal pacemakers, and vaccines for rabies, distemper, anthrax, tetanus, and feline leukemia have all been developed through animal research (4). And the list goes on.

Do we want to wipe out leukemia? Alzheimer's? AIDS? Diabetes? Do we

want better vaccines and more effective treatments and cures for high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, strokes? All of these advancements and more are possible within 25 years because of research and experimentation with animals. Frankie Trull, president of the Foundation for Biomedical Research, believes that, "...if efforts by animal-rights activists to legislate and regulate animal research out of existence are successful, they will slow or even stop much current research into AIDS and other diseases" (5). We have a moral obligation to ourselves to ensure that animal research continues, and as Dr. Frederick Goodwin, administrator of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration has stated, medical research is one of the most noble of man's endeavors (6).

Are animals used in research exploited and subjected to unnecessary pain? A 1985 survey by the US Department of Agriculture showed that of all the research projects they funded, 62% were projects involving no pain for the animals, 32% were projects in which the animals felt no pain because they received either anesthesia or pain-killing drugs, and only 6% were projects in which these devices must be withheld because they would obscure the results of the research (an example being the study of pain, a major human health problem) (7).

The Animal Welfare Act sets forth standards for the care and treatment for laboratory animals, which include housing, feeding, cleanliness, ventilation, and the use of anesthesia or pain-killing drugs for potentially painful procedures and for post-operative care (6). Each institution that conducts research receiving U.S. Public Health Service funding, or that is registered as a licensed research facility with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has an active "Animal Care and Use Committee" that regulates the complete animal-care program. Incidentally, each

committee has at least one member who is not affiliated with the institution and one member who is a veterinarian (8).

Arthur S. Hall, Director of Oregon Health Sciences University's Department of Animal Care, describes the thoroughness of the committee's inspections. "They'll look at some of the smallest things. A light bulb is burned out. Any rusty wires protruding into a pan. They'll dig to the bottom of feeding buckets to check for mold. They'll look for scratched paint. They wrote us up for not trimming the toenails short enough on this animal." A date for compliance is given to labs, and if it is not met, fines are levied (9).

Basically, bad care equals bad science. If the animals are not treated as comfortably as possible, the unknown factor of stress enters the experiment, which can obscure the results. Therefore, it is in the scientist's best interests to treat the animals carefully. As Dr. Michael E. DeBakey, world-renowned heart surgeon, remarked, "These scientists, veterinarians, physicians, surgeons, and others who do research in animal laboratories are as much concerned about the care of the animals as anyone can be. Their respect for the dignity of life and compassion for the sick and disabled, in fact, are what motivated them to search for ways of relieving the pain and suffering caused by diseases" (8).

Are there any alternatives to animal research? According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, non-animal models and methods are actually used more frequently than animals because they are cheaper and easier (10). Such methods include chemical techniques, bacteria or cell cultures, computer simulations, and surveys. However, most non-animal methods are based on knowledge gained through animal studies.

How can researchers use cell cultures, which do not have bones, to develop a cure for arthritis or other bone diseases? How can cell cultures help perfect

surgical techniques for organ transplantation? Dr. Gerald E. Merwin of the University of Florida Health Science Center states, "Studies in an isolated culture of cells or tissues can provide only certain types of useful data, because life is sustained by a complex interaction of chemical, hormonal and electrical activity that affects all parts of the body" (11). Most biological research requires, and will in the future continue to require the use of live animals.

These facts that support animal research should be enough to justify its use in order to preserve human life. However, if the use of animal experimentation is so obviously essential to scientific and medical research, why is there such a strong movement against it? A recent Media General-Associated Press opinion poll showed 81% of the American people believe animals should be used in laboratory research (12). Obviously, the opposition is a minority. This minority, however, is growing, and is dominating the press and shifting the whole debate out of perspective. How is it able to do this? The problem is ignorance, and the solution is education.

"We do not portray animals as animals in our society. Mickey Mouse, Big Bird, and Donald Duck are always dressed in clothes. They walk, and they talk, and they cook, and they eat. No wonder some people get confused," says Jerod M. Loeb, director of the division of biomedical sciences for the American Medical Association (13). Many people in society already have a warped perception of animals, and animal-rights activists tend to play on this perception. Their entire campaign is designed to affect people's emotions strongly, and those who are not informed of the facts can be easily swayed.

What we urgently need is to educate the public. We need to let them know that if animal research ends, the advances we have come to expect from medical science will end; all hopes of a cure for cancer will fade; diseases such as AIDS

will continue to kill thousands; heart, lung, and kidney diseases will continue to take the lives of millions; research into preventing birth defects and the diseases of aging will cease; and many new antibiotics, vaccines, drugs, and surgical procedures will remain undiscovered.

The public is bombarded daily with images and pleas from the animal-rights movements, but what about the opposite viewpoint? What about images of the pain, suffering, and needless deaths of millions of humans? What about the scientists, physicians, researchers, and surgeons who know how essential animal research is? We need to hear from them; we need a highly public campaign to counteract the opposing one already firmly in effect. We need to reach those people who are uncomfortable with the image of an animal in a cage being used for research, and present to them the image of a sick child in bed, in pain and suffering. We need to explain to them that if they choose the "no animal research" alternative, they should be willing to face the AIDS patient, the cancer patient, and the diabetes victim, and defend their belief that preventing the humane sacrifice of even a few animals is more important than finding cures for their diseases.

Once we present the facts, and the public has seen both sides of the issue, those who value their lives and the lives of their loved ones will have no rational choice but to understand and agree. The use of animals in scientific and medical research is necessary, morally and ethically justified, and **must** continue.

Endnotes

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INSPIRATION IN NATURE

Sometimes a seemingly trivial, natural event, such as the hatching of a butterfly or the appearance of a rainbow, can lead to a sudden inspiration of mind or emotion. In his poem, "The Darkling Thrush," Thomas Hardy creates an illusion of optimism through the sight of a singing bird, yet actually leaves the reader with a despondent feeling. Through his carefully chosen setting, tone, and theme, Hardy creates a lyric which teases the reader by dramatically conveying the inspiration of nature, yet refusing to let it inspire the speaker.

Hardy chose for his poem a morbid setting, full of gloom, in order to provide a contrast to the spectacle of nature (the darkling thrush). Through well-chosen

adjectives, Hardy creates a sense of lifelessness and decay that is the very reason the thrush's song seems to be unusual. Phrases such as "specter-grey," "weakening eye of day," "the Century's corpse," "crypt the cloud canopy," and the "death-lament" all relate to death or waste and turn an ordinary, drab winter day into a scene full of death and debilitation. Then, when "at once a voice arose in a full heated evensong of joy," the sight of the thrush becomes a cause for inspiration, for through the gloom "there trembled...some blessed Hope."

The tone of the poem serves both to build up the impact of the thrush's song and also fails to let it climax. Hardy spends the first two stanzas establishing a bleak tone, with the speaker's despondent mood of thought and the corresponding gloom of the natural landscape, as demonstrated in the line, "Every spirit upon earth seemed fervorless as I." Then, even as he describes the thrush itself in unflattering terms, the tone of the third stanza is uplifting as he includes such phrases as "a voice arose," "full-hearted evensong," "joy illimited." The sudden change in the tone heightens its effects. Yet the fourth stanza is anti-climactic. The speaker finds "so little cause...for such ecstatic sound." The tone is one of wonder and slight confusion, not one of inspiration, as might be expected.

Hardy seems to be contradicting himself when he establishes the theme of his poem. The dark, gloomy setting contrasted by the single thrush singing a joyful song seems to convey this message: Even though the world may seem dark and desolate, there is still a need to sustain hope. Yet in the final stanza, Hardy discredits his own theme when the speaker refuses to do that very thing—sustain hope. The speaker is untouched by the inspirational song of the thrush and merely wonders at the bird's "blessed Hope, where of [the bird] knew and [he] was unaware."

The deliberate ambiguity of Thomas Hardy's poem is one of the reasons it is so

appealing. At the end of the poem, the speaker still finds no cause for rejoicing; he simply pauses to marvel at the sound of the thrush's song against so bleak a setting. The reader wants to be consoled with a traditional ending, but this poem is unusual. It might cause some to wonder if the speaker just missed the entire point, or if it is merely an illusion to find cause for hope in the bird's song. Hopefully, the latter is false, and one can still find inspiration in nature.

Readers' Comments on Christine Colburn's Portfolio

The "engaging" and sustained voice of the writer was immediately apparent to readers of the this portfolio. Readers praised the reflective letter: "All writers should care about their topics, and this letter is an excellent statement on the writer's process and concerns." The writer's ability to attach meaning to the experience she relates in her narrative also impressed readers. Her explanatory essay is sophisticated in its use of quotations and information to support the writer's ideas. Readers found her literary analysis "intuitive and mature," a demonstration of the writer's ability to "analyze and explain the often contradictory literal and metaphoric meaning of a seemingly simple, transparent poem."

Appendix A: 1991 Scoring Scale for Portfolios

General Directions: Portfolios should be read holistically and given a single score on a three-point scale: "6," "3," or "0." In assigning that score, do not average the four pieces but judge the quality of the portfolio as a whole. In doing so, give greater weight to the longer and more substantial pieces, and reward variety and creativity. Please consult the chief reader if you believe the portfolio does not meet the stated requirements or if for any other reason you have trouble scoring it.

- 6 The student receives six (6) credits and fully satisfies the university requirement in college composition.

A "6" portfolio is a very good to excellent one. It is characteristically substantial in content (both length and development) and mature in style. The writer demonstrates a sure control of language. Voice is usually strong, and there is a clear sense of audience and context. Often, there will be a close connection between the writer's sense of self and the writing and/or a thematic unity within the four separate portfolio pieces. A "6" portfolio typically takes risks that work—either in content or style—and challenges the reader by trying something different.

- 3 The student receives three (3) credits and enrolls in ENG 113 (Advanced College Composition).

A "3" portfolio is a good one. The writing is clearly competent both in content and style. But in contrast to a "6" portfolio, a "3" is often characterized by unevenness of quality or by a lack of development in one or more pieces that is not compensated for by strengths in others. Often the reader wants "more." There is a sense of audience and context, and there is control of language, but some of the writing may either seem formulaic or lack strong voice. A "3" portfolio suggests the possibilities of achievement that the "6" portfolio demonstrates.

- 0 The student receives no credits and enrolls in ENG 111 (College Composition) and then ENG 112 (Composition and Literature).

A "0" portfolio is a poor to fair one. The writing may be clear and error-free, but is usually thin in substance and immature in style. Pieces tend to be either short and undeveloped or abstract and vague. It may seem as if the writer has put minimal effort into the portfolio. Moreover, the writer rarely takes risks, relying instead on formulas and clichés; if risks are taken, they don't work. The writer seems not to have a clear concept of audience or context, and control of language is uneven at best. Most of the pieces lack strong voice.

Appendix B: 1991 Description of Portfolio Contents

A portfolio consists of a completed cover sheet together with the following four (4) pieces of writing:

1. A Reflective Letter

This letter, addressed to Miami University writing teachers, introduces the student and the portfolio. It may describe the process used in creating any one portfolio piece, discuss important choices in creating the portfolio, explain the place of writing in the student's life, or use a combination of these approaches. The letter should provide readers with a clearer understanding of the student as writer.

2. A Story or a Description

This narrative or descriptive piece should be based upon the student's own experience. Its aim is to communicate an experience rather than to explain it. The writing will most likely be personal and informal. A short story is acceptable but a poem is not.

3. An Explanatory Essay

This essay should develop and clarify an idea or a concept. In style, it may be formal or informal, but it should have a central idea. Its aim is to be informative and enlightening: readers should know or understand more than before. A paper that explains a physical process—a "how-to" paper—is not appropriate. Neither is a research paper that merely assembles information from other sources and is not based on the student's own ideas. This essay may have been begun in a high school course other than English.

4. An Analysis of a Written Text

This essay should analyze a short story, novel, poem, play, or piece of non-fiction prose written by a professional, a classmate, or oneself. It may interpret all or part of the text, evaluate it, show how it works, explain its significance, compare it to other texts, relate it to personal experience and values, or combine these approaches. Even if some secondary sources are used, readers should come away with a strong sense of the student's own response to the text. (If the text is not commonly known, a copy of it should be included in the portfolio.)

Appendix C: 1991 Guidelines for Portfolio Submission

1. All materials must be mailed on or before June 3, 1991 by the student's supervising English teacher. The supervising teacher may be any English teacher the student has had for a course during high school. The supervising teacher will sign a statement on the cover sheet that, to the best of his or her knowledge, all writing in the portfolio is the student's. The student will sign a similar statement.

2. The items of the portfolio should be arranged in the following order: a) completed cover sheet; b) reflective letter; c) story or description; d) explanatory essay; and e) analysis of a written text.

3. The written work—not counting the cover sheet and not counting the draft material required by item 4 below—should in no case exceed 12 typed, double-spaced pages (8.5 x 11"). Portfolios longer than 12 pages will not be read.

4. For any one piece, all draft material must be included (paper clipped at the end of the appropriate essay).

5. All items—except the draft material of item 4 above—must be free of teachers' comments, grades, and markings.

6. The student's name must not appear anywhere except on the cover sheet. All writing should have the title and the student's social security number in the upper-right corner.

7. Individual pages for each item should be stapled together. The 5-item portfolio should be fastened with a paper clip. No folders, please.

8. Papers written in class or out of school are acceptable. Papers revised after being returned by a teacher are acceptable.

9. Students will be rewarded for originality and variety so long as the guidelines for the four pieces of writing are observed.

10. Cost for portfolio submission is \$21. Students will be billed during the summer. Results will be announced in early July.

PORTFOLIOS MUST BE
POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN
JUNE 3, 1991

Send to

PORTFOLIO
Department of English
Miami University
Oxford, OH 450546
(513) 529-5221

Appendix D: 1991 Portfolio Cover Sheet

Miami University Writing Portfolio Program

To the Student: Complete the first half of this cover sheet (type or print) and give it to your supervising teacher with your portfolio and a stamped 10" x 13" envelope addressed to Portfolioc, Department of English, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio 45056,.

Student's Name:

Social Security Number:

High School:

Home Address:

I pledge that all the writing included in the attached portfolio is my own.

Signature of Student _____

* * * * *

To the Teacher: If you believe the attached portfolio contains only the student's own work, please complete this form, insert it and the portfolio into the envelope provided, and mail it no later than June 3, 1991. Thanks!

Name of Supervising Teacher:

Teacher's Home Phone Number:

Teacher's Home Address:

To the best of my knowledge, the attached written work has been produced by this student.

Signature of Teacher _____

Portfolios must be postmarked no later than June 3, 1991

* PLEASE NOTE: A NUMBER OF TEACHERS COPY THE PORTFOLIO COVER SHEET FOR THEIR STUDENTS. HOWEVER, A NEW FORM IS BEING DESIGNED FOR PORTFOLIOS SUBMITTED IN 1992. PLEASE WRITE OR CALL THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT (513-529-5221) IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE AN UPDATED COVER SHEET.

Appendix E: 1991 Supervising Teachers

Karen M. Abner	Colerain HS	Edith Crocker	Lebanon HS
Timothy D. Adams	Kankakee Valley HS	Mr. Dalton	Parkway Central HS
Sara C. Alexander	Holton-Arms School	Josephine Daniels	Marion Catholic HS
Sharon Alloway*		Gerald A. Davis	Clinton HS
Susan Anderson	Milford HS	Angelo W. De Angelo, Jr.	Canfield HS
Connie J. Anderson	Spencerville HS	Constance Deardorff	Oldenburg Academy
Lila Ansley	Padua Franciscan HS	Louis A. DeMarco	Mathews HS
Carolyn J. Anthony	Richmond Heights HS	Charles Devor	Greenville HS
Nicholas E. Argento, Jr.	Boston College HS	Carol A. Divine	Noblesville HS
Cathleen Arnold	Greenhills HS	Robert Dizney	Fairfield HS
Mary Lou Arons	Alter HS	Pamela Dodd	Duluth HS
Richard L. Arthur	Wm. H. Harrison HS	Charles R. Dodsworth	Northmont HS
Jean M. Aumuller	Dublin HS	Diane Doerfler	Brookfield Central HS
Deborah Baker	Columbia HS	Robert L. Doverspike	Jamestown HS
Leonard Balk	Chagrin Falls HS	Karen Downing	Valley HS
Patrick Ballinger	Sycamore HS	MaryBeth Draving	Pike HS
Carol I. Banck		Carol T. Dressman	Mother of Mercy HS
Judy Barnes	Shawnee Mission East HS	Barbara Dubb	North Farmington HS
Ken Barrett	Martinsville HS	Susan Dugas	Middletown Christian HS
Marilyn Bates	Mount Lebanon HS	Nancy M. Dunker	Hudson HS
Joseph Bauers	Champaign Central HS	Michael Durbin	Anthony Wayne HS
Rolla Beach	Grove City HS	Nancy M. Ellingson	LaCrosse Central HS
Jeff A. Bean	Catholic Central HS	Susan B. Ellis	Walton HS
Nancy C. Beattie	Worthington HS	Dorothy Elrick	Medina HS
John D. Bender	Shaker Heights HS	Marilyn Elzey	Talawanda HS
Mona Beverly	Karns HS	Carolyn L. England	Heath HS
Cliff Biggers	North Cobb HS	Melinda Ernstsenger	Our Lady of Providence HS
Albert Bindman	Worthington HS	Lydia Esslinger	Syosset HS
Robert L. Blake	Medina HS	Lucinda M. Eubanks	Jackson HS
Carolyn Boniol	Alexandria Senior HS	Brenda Evans	Brentwood Academy
Robert E. Boyer	Wootton HS	Garnet Evilsizer	Caldwell HS
Nita P. Bunnell	Deerfield Academy	Brooke B. Farkas	Boardman HS
Cindy Burkhart	Fairfield HS	Laszlo W. Farkas	Howland HS
Margie L. Bush	Shawnee HS	Frank Filisthwait	The Westminster Schools
Teresa Butchko	Lake Ridge Academy	Janet E. Fleischman	Notre Dame Academy
Donnette Calhoon	Hilliard HS	James M. Fogarty	Bennet Academy
Kelsey Caples	Canyon Del Oro	Toby Fouks	Frindale Secondary School
D. Bruce Carr	Hawken School	Sue Frazier	Pioneer HS
Linda B. Chambers	Holy Name HS	Norman L. Frey	New Trier HS
E. L. Clark	Van Wert HS	Martin Friess	Delta HS
Thomas J. Clark		Stephen E. Froelich	Findlay HS
Thomas W. Clark, Jr.	Jackson HS	Allan Fuller	Worthington HS
Joan M. Claiworthy	Clarence Central HS	Patricia Gafford	Walter Johnson HS
Jean A. Coakley	Miami University, Middletown	Julienne Gagliardi	Boardman HS
Patricia Colley	St. Xavier	Richard T. Gardner	Marshfield HS
Wenda J. Collins	West Lafayette HS	Jean Gaumer	Ridgefield HS
Lucy S. Coney	Gahanna Lincoln HS	J. Gavlinski	Walsh Jesuit HS
Barbara Cossarini	Parkway Central Senior HS	Thomas Geier	Mt. Notre Dame HS
Mary Creekbaum	Edgewood HS	Ellen Geisler	Mentor HS

* At the time of printing, some teachers' high school affiliation was not available.

Patricia L. Gell
 Carol A. Gerling
 David E. Goins
 Susan Good
 Jane Gould
 Todd Gutz
 Sylvia Greene
 Margaret Guentert
 Michael A. Gunther
 Deanna M. Gutschow
 Carmon C. Hacker
 DJ Hammond
 Lisa D. Hamrick
 Rhoda Hannan
 Michelle Harnett
 Larry D. Hartz
 Dorothy Hartz
 Wayne Harvey
 Katherine M. Harvard
 Mr. Heady
 Catherine W. Heasley
 Linda C. Heile
 James L. Hemmert
 Judith C. Henchel
 Robert M. Hendrickson
 Michael P. Hemminger
 Marilyn R. Herring
 Janet H. Heveran
 Mary K. Hill
 MaryAnn Hines
 Kay Hogan
 Nora Jane Holbrook
 Kathy Homrig
 Wayne Homstad
 Barbara Huberty
 Karen M. Hudson
 Karen L. Hull
 James F. Hurley
 Mary Ann Jackson
 Vernon Jensen
 Louis Jobst
 Lyn E. Johnson
 J. S. Jones
 Sister Mary Josette
 Roseann Julian
 Mary E. Kastner
 Ann Kay
 Susan M. Kelley
 Kathleen C. Kenny
 Janet Kessler
 Lynn Kitchen
 Katrina Kittle
 Judith D. Klefas
 Dianne Klein
 Roseann Knepp
 Ken Kopriva
 Patricia M. Kostraba

Westlake HS
 Rochester Adams HS
 Tri-Valley HS
 Villa Duchesne Academy
 St. Louis Country Day
 Findlay HS
 Oak Ridge HS
 Walnut Hills HS
 Strasburg-Franklin HS
 Whitefish Bay HS
 Talawanda HS
 Madeira HS
 McAuley HS
 Union-Scioto HS
 Crystal Lake Central HS
 Franklin HS
 Monroe-Woodbury HS
 Worthington HS
 Millbrook School
 Lawrence Central HS
 Shaker Heights HS
 McAuley HS
 Carroll HS
 Hazen Union School
 Boardman HS
 Berkshire HS
 Ursuline Academy
 Academy of the Holy Names
 Sacred Heart Academy
 Westerville North HS
 Cleveland Heights HS
 Franklin HS
 Lawrence North HS
 Sheboygan North HS
 Canfield HS
 South Decatur HS
 Big Walnut HS
 Lenox Memorial HS
 Bishop Dwenger HS
 Edina HS
 Parkway Central HS
 Stow HS
 Howland HS
 Notre Dame Academy
 Talawanda HS
 Livingston HS
 Mansfield Senior HS
 Milford HS
 Gilmour Academy
 Clermont Northeastern HS
 Sycamore HS
 Centerville HS
 Sycamore HS
 Bowling Green HS
 Hudson HS
 Lake Forest HS
 Maplewood HS

Lawrence M. Kraft
 John Kuehn
 Elaine Kunz
 David A. Lachey
 Leslie K. Ladowski
 Lynn Lauck
 Norma P. Law
 Ray Lawrence
 Ray H. Lawson
 Sharon Layton
 Ted Leahey
 Clarence Leugers
 Josephine D. Lewis
 Ellen Jo Ljung
 Charlotte Y. Longo
 Wm. Dennis Lyon
 Cindy Mahin
 Sandra L. Mangen
 Virgil C. Mann
 Peter T. Markovich, Jr.
 Susan S. Marrs
 Nancy Marsh-McGarry
 David Matthews
 Thomas A. Maybin
 Pamela A. McCarthy
 Robin McConnell
 John McIntosh
 James S. Milka
 Rev. Gregory Mohrman
 Henry Monahan
 Frank Montgomery
 Katsy Morris
 Janet M. Muffet
 Virginia Mullaney
 Kathie A. Naab
 David A. Narducci
 Karen A. Narkus
 Doris Nell
 Cheryl M. Nelli
 Jodie R. Newman
 Dee Ann Newton
 Linda Nichols
 John R. Obermeyer
 Fran Y. Osegveda
 Anne H. Padilla
 Thomas D. Palmerle
 Dennis Parr
 Eileen K. Parris
 Dolly Anne Perez
 Candace Perkins
 Donna J. Phillips
 Joyce E. Ping
 John C. Polivka
 Guy Poppewell
 Richard F. Pratt
 Po Pyle
 Jean Queen

Libertyville HS
 Kettering Fairmont HS
 Whitmer HS
 Strongsville HS
 St. Charles HS
 Eastwood HS
 West Carrollton Senior HS
 Carmel HS
 Rochester HS
 Medina Senior HS
 Union City Community HS
 Versailles HS
 Hinsdale Central HS
 Glenbard West HS
 Ridge HS
 Madison West HS
 Walnut Hills HS
 Franklin HS
 Lima Senior HS
 North Canton Hoover HS
 Seven Hills Upper School
 Southeast HS

Cuyahoga Falls HS
 Hoover HS
 Clay Senior HS
 Seven Hills School
 Boardman HS
 St. Louis Priory
 Downers Grove South HS
 Batavia HS
 Clark HS
 Buckeye Trail HS
 Eastern HS
 Shawnee HS
 St. Joseph Central Catholic
 Shrine HS
 Lebanon HS
 Brentwood HS
 Lakota HS
 Oldham County HS
 Brunswick HS
 Oak Hills HS
 Ursuline HS
 Bowling Green HS
 Sylvania Northview
 Homestead HS
 Norwood Senior HS
 Hillwood HS
 St. Charles HS
 Springboro HS
 Beavercreek HS
 Turpin HS
 Middletown HS
 Clay HS
 Wooster HS
 Arundel Senior HS

Casey S. Reason
 Christine Redman
 Mary Jane Reed
 Therese Renaud
 Gregory Renneker
 Evelyn J. Rensch
 G. Scott Revis
 Joan L. Reynolds
 Steven P. H. Ricard
 Joan Riha
 Chris Rose
 Penny Rosenow
 Donald Ross
 Marcia L. Rozevink
 Mrs. Rufo
 Morena Rugg
 Bonnie Rupe
 Gregory R. Saclens
 Robert Sauerbrey
 Sharon Schneider
 Betty Schroeder
 Fred J. Schueb
 Donna Schultz
 Sherri L. Sheffler
 S. A. Shields
 Cherie Short
 Stanley Siedlecki III
 Sister Mary Hope Sieron
 Barbara J. Silber
 Joyce A. Simmelink
 Bonnie R. Sipe
 Pamela K. Smith
 Carolyn Smith
 Jerry L. Solomon
 Sandra J. Soson
 Faye S. Spangler
 Daniel T. Speece
 Jane Sprunger
 William J. Starr
 Mary Steger
 Marjorie Stelmach
 Thomas M. Stephan
 Jeanne B. Stephens
 Wanda L. Stevens
 Joyce Stocker
 Jennifer Stockslager
 David L. Stockum
 Michael Stratton
 Fredia Summers
 Jon C. Swartz
 Thelma Swihart
 David E. Tabler
 Gail A. Tankersley
 Sister Mary Thomasita
 Mary Ann Tille
 Virginia Tinalin
 Nancy E. Tobergte

Sylvania Southview
 Midland HS
 Solon HS
 Mt. Lebanon HS
 Stephen T. Badin HS
 Gull Lake HS
 Beaver Creek HS
 West Potomac HS
 Perrysburg HS
 Normandy HS
 Seymour HS
 DeKalb HS
 Springboro HS
 Pettisville HS
 Willoughby South HS
 St. Francis De Sales
 Edgewood HS
 St. Ursula Academy
 LaSalle HS
 Richwoods HS
 Holgate HS
 Parkway North Senior HS
 St. Joseph Academy
 Eastwood HS
 Ross HS
 Archbold HS
 Mayfield HS
 Bishop Watterson HS
 Lake Forest HS
 Mentor HS
 North Miami Senior HS
 Middletown HS
 Madison HS
 Webster Groves HS
 Wilton HS
 Versailles HS
 Rootstown HS
 Colerain Senior HS
 Union County HS
 Hudson HS
 Ladue Horton Watkins
 Stow HS
 Laurel School
 Carlisle HS
 River View HS
 Dixie HS
 Lancaster HS
 Middletown HS
 Miami East HS
 Benjamin Logan HS
 Eaton HS
 Ann Arbor Pioneer HS
 Copley HS
 Notre Dame Academy
 Ayrsville HS
 Anderson HS

Twila Toth
 Helen Trares
 Judy Trombley
 Steve Turner
 Harriet Uphaff
 Judy L. Van Kirk
 Sue VanMeter
 Kathleen Veith
 Maria Venezio
 Carol Voss
 J. Michael Wagner
 Sandra M. Walden
 Angela Warye
 Stephen Weadock
 William C. Weber
 Janan Weinstein
 Brian H. Welch
 Nancy R. Wesley
 Marian J. West
 John T. Whaley
 C. M. Whub
 Linda Wolverton
 Lewis W. Wood
 Trudy Wright
 June Yantis
 Mary Jane Yelton-Kaufman
 Mary E. Yorke
 Christopher Young
 Jean Yousey
 Michael J. Zahm

Wadsworth HS
 Archbishop Hoban HS
 Minnetonka HS
 Hamilton HS
 Troy HS
 Walnut Ridge
 Poland Seminary HS
 Hudson HS
 Scotch Plains-Fanwood HS
 Lafayette HS
 Princeton HS
 Westerville South HS
 Dublin HS
 Sidney HS
 Libertyville HS
 Lake Zurich Senior HS
 Villa Duchesne Academy
 Union County HS
 Beaver Creek HS
 Farragut HS
 Milford HS
 Piper HS
 Northridge HS
 Sylvania Northview
 Milford HS
 Munster HS
 Mentor HS
 Chippewa HS
 Lancaster Central HS